United Nations S/PV.6869

Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6869th meeting

Wednesday, 21 November 2012, 3.45 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri	(India)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-60050 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from the region.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to brief the Council today on my three-day visit to Egypt, Israel, the occupied Palestinian territories and Jordan.

Since the situation in Gaza and Israel escalated last week, I made it my priority to contribute to efforts to halt the violence, with the priority aim of protecting civilians. I cancelled a previously planned trip to travel to the Middle East instead as a clear signal of the need for international diplomatic mobilization to prevent a further escalation that would put the whole region at risk, and to strengthen the commendable efforts, led by Egypt, to reach a ceasefire.

I warmly welcome today's ceasefire announcement. I commend the parties for stepping back from the brink, and I commend President Morsy of Egypt for his exceptional leadership. Our focus now must be on ensuring that the ceasefire holds and that all those in need in Gaza — and there are many — receive the humanitarian assistance they need.

It is a huge relief for the people of Gaza and Israel and for the international community that the violence is stopping, but we are all aware of the risks, and we are all aware that there are many details that must be solidified if a broad, durable ceasefire is to take firm hold over the longer term. It is imperative that both sides stick to the ceasefire in order to allow these underlying issues to be addressed in a sustainable fashion.

Today's announcement follows a week of devastating violence in southern Israel and Gaza, including the terror attack today on a bus in downtown Tel Aviv, which I strongly and immediately condemned. This brought us to an important moment, after a week of intensive diplomacy to reach a ceasefire. In that regard, I met with Egyptian President Morsy, League of Arab States Secretary-General Elaraby, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Palestinian President Abbas, Jordan's King Abdullah and Foreign Minister Judeh and many other leaders in each location, including the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Egypt, the Minister of Defence, the Foreign Minister and President of Israel, and Prime Minister Fayyad. I also met with United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton while in Jerusalem. I have just spoken with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel for a second time today.

My paramount concern throughout has been for the safety and well-being of all civilians, no matter where they are. Innocent people, including children, have been killed and injured on both sides. Families on both sides were forced to cower in fear as the violence raged around them. It pained me to be back here under circumstances similar to those that prevailed when I visited in 2009 during Operation Cast Lead. Recent events have been eerily reminiscent.

This morning, I heard from the United Nations team in Gaza. They reported on the impact of violence, including increased civilian casualties, which reached more than 139 Palestinians killed, more than 70 of them civilians, and more than 900 injured, with the displacement of 10,000 Gazans, who are now in 12 schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and two others run by local authorities. UNRWA has emphasized the critical need to support ongoing programmes on food assistance, health and sanitation, which are experiencing funding shortfalls and will now be burdened by having to support additional displaced persons. I am asking our emergency and humanitarian teams to be prepared to do whatever they can to alleviate the suffering.

Attacks on both sides continued today as the ceasefire approached. The bombing today in Tel Aviv injured 23 people, including three severely. The indiscriminate firing of rockets targeting Israel also continued. One long-range rocket landed in the outskirts of Jerusalem yesterday, with no injuries reported. Since 14 November, rocket fire has resulted in the deaths of four Israeli civilians, with 219 reported injured, most of them civilians. Three are in serious condition. One Israeli soldier was killed yesterday, and 16 Israeli soldiers have been wounded, one critically.

Overall, in the same period, more than 1,456 rockets have been fired from Gaza into Israel. One hundred and forty-two fell inside Gaza itself. Approximately 409 were intercepted by the Iron Dome anti-missile system. Ten Fajr-5 missiles were shot at Tel Aviv suburbs and the sea, five of which were intercepted by the Iron Dome system. Three long-range missiles hit the outskirts of Jerusalem, which is unprecedented.

Since Israel's targeted assassination from the air, on 14 November, of Ahmed Al-Jaabari, the chief of the military wing of Hamas, and with Israel's offensive in Gaza in its eighth day, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) publicly reported that it had conducted strikes against more than 1,450 targets in Gaza. Air strikes targeted sites across the Gaza Strip and included, but were not limited to, rocket-launching sites, military bases, police stations and tunnels along the border with Egypt.

The Israeli Air Force also targeted residential and office buildings that the IDF said belonged to members of Palestinian armed groups. Hundreds of buildings were hit by Israeli Air Force attacks. Media office and personnel of Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa television were targeted on 18 and 20 November, resulting in the deaths of three media professionals and injuries to 10 others.

I consistently condemn indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza into Israel. At the same time, I also believe that the excessive and disproportionate use of force that endangers civilian lives is intolerable. It is unacceptable for citizens on both sides to permanently live in fear of the next strike. Put simply, all parties must respect international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of all civilians at all times.

Earlier today, I travelled to Egypt for the second time this trip to support the ceasefire talks in the final phase taking place under the auspices of President Morsy, with the active support of several regional and international leaders. Visits of Foreign Ministers of several countries, including France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and many Arab countries were a further strong indication of the concerns of the international community and its shared goal of stopping the violence.

In my meeting with President Morsy only hours ago, he said that he was very close in his effort to achieve a ceasefire. He also reiterated the need to address the underlying issues of concern to both sides, so that the ceasefire could be sustainable. In addition, President Morsy expressed his concern that the comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, to which Egypt is committed, had not yet been achieved. I underscored the importance of President Morsy's efforts given his leadership and contacts with all sides.

I know that Palestinians and Israelis both have fundamental concerns about the status quo ante. As President Morsy said, those underlying issues need to be addressed. The United Nations is prepared to help to facilitate all efforts in that regard. But people are dying every day and cities are being targeted every day. The humanitarian crisis is growing exponentially the longer the crisis continues. We need the ceasefire now, followed immediately by negotiations on the underlying issues. That is the sequence that can save lives now.

The crisis underscored that the status quo is unsustainable and that long-term solutions must be found to the problems of Gaza, and for the Palestinians as a whole. Core elements of resolution 1860 (2009) remain unimplemented. Once calm is fully restored and the violence ends, a broader ceasefire will have to address all the underlying causes of conflict, including a full opening of the crossings, Palestinian reconciliation and an end to weapon-smuggling.

It is clear that the international community must speak with one voice to prevent a return to violence. I plan to keep in touch with world leaders, and I have asked my Special Coordinator, Robert Serry, to remain in Cairo to support the efforts to achieve a sustainable ceasefire.

Finally, let me conclude by stressing, as I have during all my discussions during this intense trip, that in these testing times, when the entire region is experiencing profound transformations, we must not lose sight of the fact that peace must remain our ultimate priority goal. Our devotion to a two-State solution ending a prolonged occupation and ending the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is more urgent than ever. Achieving that vision, which has been affirmed repeatedly by the Council, is long overdue and paramount to the stability of the region. Only a just, comprehensive peace can bring lasting security to all.

I am leaving shortly for New York. I wish the members of the Council a happy Thanksgiving.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6870

Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6870th meeting

Monday, 26 November 2012, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri	(India)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	Togo	Mr. Kandangha-Bariki
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Working methods

Letter dated 19 November 2012 from the Permanent Representatives of India and Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/853)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-60476 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Working methods

Letter dated 19 November 2012 from the Permanent Representatives of India and Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/853)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/853, which contains a letter dated 19 November 2012 from the Permanent Representatives of Portugal and India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I thank you, Sir, for organizing this open debate on the Council's working methods. It has been a year since the Council, under Portugueuse presidency, held the most recent debate on this issue (see S/PV.6672). That debate demonstrated yet again the great interest that this issue raises among the wider membership. Council working methods are indeed a matter of interest to all United Nations Members.

Open debates are held so that we can listen to the wider membership. Indeed, the debate last year was very useful, with many relevant inputs by Council members and non-members alike, focused on ways to enhance transparency, efficiency and the interaction of the Security Council with the general membership. They were instrumental in feeding the Council's work on this area during the months that followed. As a follow-up, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters, which I have chaired since January, met to discuss the set of measures proposed during the debate in order to identify areas of future work. In that same vein, members of the Informal Working Group exchanged views with members of the group of five small nations on the proposals put forward by that group, which reflect many of the ideas floated during the debate.

To improve the working methods, we have to start by improving the way the internal work of the Council is done.A significant part of the Council's work is done in consultations. While the Council has made an effort to meet more often in public — a trend that should be encouraged, in particular by presidencies — consultations are indeed useful in helping the Council prepare its decisions. However, questions of transparency and inclusiveness remain important within the Council, to Council members, as was noted in several interventions at the debate last year. There is indeed work to do in the internal aspects of the Council's work.

Following consultations organized by the Council in March, during the United Kingdom presidency, a discussion was held on further measures to improve interactivity, better planning of work and better use of conference resources. Those same aspects were further developed in the Informal Working Group and later on condensed in a note issued by the President in (S/2012/402). The underlying idea is to stress the informal aspects of consultations — such as abolishing pre-organized lists of speakers and avoiding reading out lengthy statements by briefers and Council members — better organization of resources to allow more space for subsidiary bodies to meet, more use of video teleconferences to avoid the costly presence of briefers, and better planning of work by readjusting mandates and reporting cycles with a view to evening up the workload throughout the year, thereby leaving more time for the Council to prepare decisions and discussion of conflict prevention.

Another aspect that was mentioned in several interventions at the last debate was the practice related to the work of pen-holders and the process to appoint the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies. The Informal Working Group is now concluding the consideration of this question in a draft note that deals with issues of enhanced participation, inclusiveness and exchange of information among Council members. These are

crucial elements to enhance the Council's efficiency and ultimately help promote the necessary consensus-building within the Council. I hope, with the support and flexibility of all members of the Working Group, to conclude the work on this within the coming weeks.

On the external aspects of the Security Council's work, the Working Group is considering further measures to improve transparency and interaction with the wider membership. A draft note is now being discussed on ways to improve open debates by enhancing the interactivity of council members with non-council members in debates; by ensuring a better follow-up of open debates, including by reflecting relevant inputs of non-members in the outcome of an open debate, when there is one; and by improving their efficacy through the use of concept papers, shorter interventions and summaries of the debate, whenever possible. We are also considering measures to improve the annual report by reinforcing aspects related to the interaction with non-Council members prior to the preparation of the report and by providing more substantive information in the report and in its presentation to the General Assembly on the work of the Council.

Monthly assessments by Council presidencies are very important documents. When circulated early after the end of the respective month, they can be particularly useful instruments to elucidate on the work done. Also very useful in this regard are informal briefings to the general membership by Council Presidents once they finish their presidencies, which could be done as a matter of practice, adding to the briefing that is already done at the start of each presidency.

These are all aspects that have been discussed in the Informal Working Group and are being considered through a draft note we expect to adopt in the coming weeks. They include several ideas and proposals that were highlighted last year at the open debate. This is why we think that regular open debates on working methods, such as this, are important. They provide the necessary stimulus to the Council by signaling the areas of concern and avenues to improve its working methods that are very helpful to the Council in taking this work forward.

The note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507) remains a landmark. It represents an acquis of Council practice that can always be improved, guided by the goals of transparency, inclusiveness and enhanced interaction with the wider membership, the General Assembly and other relevant bodies. As in the past, presidential note 507 shall be updated regularly in the future with subsequent agreed measures aimed at developing and improving the Council's practice.

This debate is yet another opportunity to look to our future work to improve the working methods. In the concept paper prepared jointly by India and Portugal (S/2012/853), some other ideas are included in the bullet points that could assist us in focusing this debate. In addition to the measures that I have alluded to, many others can be addressed, such as ways to enhance interaction with regional and subregional organizations, to better interact with troop-contributing countries in order to ensure a more substantive exchange of views and more fruitful and focus discussions at meetings with troop-contributing countries, to improve the Council's interaction with the chairpersons of the Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific configurations, or ways to further improve the work of the subsidiary bodies in terms of transparency and interaction with States, regional and subregional organizations, and relevant United Nations bodies in order to increase their efficacy.

It is also important to underline the existing trend in the Council of a more flexible use of meeting formats, such as the Arria Formula meetings and the informal interactive dialogues, which are clearly an evolving trend revealed by the significant number of such meetings last year. They are proving to be very useful as practical ways for the Council to interact informally with individuals and other relevant actors, with clear benefits to Council members in the course of preparation of Council's decisions.

Prevention is a key aspect of the Council in performing its role under the United Nations Charter. Horizon-scanning meetings, also referred to at the last debate, can be very useful in helping the Council to enhance awareness of situations with potential to develop into conflicts. Last year, several presidencies continued to organize such meetings. They can indeed be important opportunities for Council members to exchange views with the Secretariat on new developments in different situations and regions of the world with deterrence potential and to help settle conflicts at an early stage. In our view, this type of informal meeting to promptly gather information and allow space for the Council to act preventively should be promoted. We therefore encourage further reflection on this issue to allow the horizon-scanning concept to be perfected and thereby help dissipate existing

reservations towards a tool that can be truly relevant insofar as prevention is concerned.

We look forward to this debate. I am sure it will be productive and enjoy contributions by all, Council and non-Council members alike. I am also sure that the Council will listen and follow it up in the months to come, in particular in the Informal Working Group. I must say that it has been particularly gratifying for me to Chair the Working Group. I have counted on the support of all members and the diligence of the Secretariat, and I am sure that we will take the work under way to a successful conclusion.

Next year, the work of the Informal Working Group will continue, building on the work in course, the discussions held in the Working Group and the ideas and proposals coming out of this debate. And we will, I hope, assess the improvements achieved next year when the Council holds the next open debate on working methods and the implementation of note 507. It is indeed crucial, bearing in mind the importance attached to this issue by the wider membership, that the Council keep organizing these debates on an annual basis.

We must recognize that some improvements have been made in recent years, but there is always room for improvement. Working methods are always a work in progress and never completed, and the generalized interest in this issue, manifested by the high level of participation here today, is proof also of the relevance of the Council as a principal organ of the United Nations.

In conclusion, have one last word to say in connection with the transparency aspects, the outstanding work of the Secretariat in making available more information on the web, including on mandates and reporting cycles, and the analytical and statistical overview of the Council over the past year, which are indeed very important contributions to promote understanding of the Council's work and the new trends and developments in the area of international peace and security. As Chair of the Informal Working Group, I commend the efforts of the Secretariat in preparing this new set of informative tools, and I welcome the new capacities offered by the Council's web page, which I invite all interested delegations to access and navigate.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to first express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate on a subject that has been the object of such great interest on the part of Member States. I am also grateful for the concept note (S/2012/853, annex) prepared by India and Portugal to guide our discussion, which provides an important list of efforts aimed at improving and modernizing the working methods of the Council and additional measures that we should consider in order to continue work in that respect. I would like to thank and particularly congratulate Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral, the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, not only for his statement just now, but also for the very hard work he has done this year at the head of that subsidiary body of the Council, which has made a considerable contribution to progress in that area.

With respect to the working methods of the Council, our main goal must be to identify those areas and matters requiring the attention of the Council in order to achieve a greater degree of transparency, participation, efficiency and accountability as the Council carries out its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. Over recent months, we have achieved some progress. On the one hand, on 5 June, we received a note by the President (S/2012/402) that complements the guidelines contained in the annex to document S/2010/507 with respect to rationalizing conference service resources and strengthening interaction. Other important procedural aspects have to do with penholders, the chairs of the subsidiary bodies, open debates, the drawing up of the annual report to the General Assembly and the monthly assessments carried out under each presidency. We are sure that discussions on those matters will continue in the Working Group, and that we will be able, before the end of the year, to adopt new guidelines for the future work of the Council.

We have also made progress in ensuring a more equitable distribution of the Council's work throughout the course of the year by adjusting mandates and their renewal periods and by aligning their requirements for the presentation of reports. The recommendations submitted in that respect by the Chair of the Working Group in July and duly reflected in the annual report presented to the General Assembly (A/67/2) just a few days ago indicate a good course of action for Council members in their efforts to improve the future planning of Council work.

I would now like to refer to some of the outstanding matters and the ways in which we can address them to achieve greater efficiency.

First, on open debates, my delegation believes that an important development contributing to improved transparency is the increase in the number of open debates organized each month. The participation of non-members of the Council in such debates contributes to the very purpose of illustrating and enriching the background on the basis of which Council members take decisions. Therefore, non-members of the Council have expressed a natural expectation that their concerns and contributions should be taken into account when the outcome document of a debate — in most cases, a presidential statement — is adopted.

Secondly, the established practice of having the President meet every month with the Member States to consider and comment on the provisional programme of work is a very useful practice and makes a significant contribution to transparency in the work of the Council. The Charter and the Council's provisional rules of procedure anticipate having States non-members of the Council be invited to participate in the Council's deliberations on situations that could have an impact on their immediate interests. There are therefore specific provisions that enable them to participate in such meetings.

Moreover, in the concept note already mentioned, reference is made to the importance of an increase in the interaction of the Council and its members with other interested parties. We believe that the Council would indeed reap considerable benefits, if a mechanism were established to improve its links with, for example, regional organizations with subsidiary or complementary responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and security, troop-contributing countries and the chairs and country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I would like to pay tribute to the extremely valuable assistance that the Council receives from the Secretariat on an ongoing basis and with the utmost discretion. In the past year, we have seen that considerable efforts have been made to improve the Council's web page, those of its subsidiary bodies and the tools available to all Member States and the public in general, including, most notably, the very useful repertoire of Security Council practice. We are grateful for the work and resources invested in that regard, which have led to a noticeable increase in the transparency of the work of the Council and an improvement in the general public's perception of the Council.

Finally, we believe that the discussions on procedural issues and the working methods of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, in particular the Sanctions Committees, are of great importance, and non-permanent members can make considerable contributions to those discussions in order to improve the work of those bodies. We believe that it is important to move in that direction.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We attach particular importance to today's debate on the working methods of the Security Council. The fact that it is being held in an open format for the fifth year in a row now shows the unswerving attention that the Council pays to Member States' proposals on improving the procedural aspects of the work of the Council, with the understanding that the working methods themselves and any potential possible modifications to them are the responsibility of the Council itself. That is a very sensitive issue in the context of the reform of the Council, and discussion on that topic should not be subjected to populism. The Council's procedures are constantly evolving, as can be seen from the information contained in the statement just given by the Chairman of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral.

In order to improve and change the work of the Security Council, we must seek to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its functioning with regard to its task of maintaining peace and security. That is the Council's primary responsibility. In the discussion on the Council's working methods, broader topics have often been raised, namely, how successfully and appropriately the Security Council manages to cope with the tasks conferred upon it by the Charter.

We sometimes hear the Council criticized for infringing on the prerogatives of other United Nations organs. We share that concern. Our colleagues know of our reservations regarding the initiatives under discussion in the Council in terms of various topical subjects, in particular generic issues. We believe that the Council should focus on country-related topics and on issues where it must and should take specific decisions.

We also understand the concern as to whether the Council uses Chapter VII of the Charter too often in imposing sanctions, which have, of course, clear humanitarian implications, to put it mildly. We would like to underscore that the Russian Federation

is in favour of the Council using the tool of preventive diplomacy and of its investing in measures aimed at the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Fuller and broader use should be made of the provisions of Chapters VI and VII. Sanctions measures, in particular scenarios in which force is used to settle conflicts, should only be employed when all possibilities for the peaceful settlement of disputes have been exhausted, the threat to international peace and security is clear and a decision to make use of Chapter VIII is supported as broadly as possible by members of the Council. I repeat that all of these are important topics, but in our view they do not fall within the rubric of the working methods of the Council. Of course, the fundamental provisions of the Charter pertaining to the right of veto do not pertain to the working methods of the Council.

In order to make the Security Council more effective and reflective of the realities of our time, we must work painstakingly to improve its working methods. To that end, we have established the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We commend the efforts of the Portuguese chairmanship, under whose leadership the work of the Working Group has taken on a new dynamism. With its specific nature, we note that the Working Group is systematic in its work and undertakes appropriate, constructive interaction with all interested delegations of the Members of the Organization

We believe that improving the quality of the Council's interaction with other United Nations bodies on issues beyond its remit is a key area for improving its working methods. A current challenge is to further improve the effective forms and methods of dialogue between the Security Council and the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, other United Nations structures, regional organizations and international partners. We must develop the practice of holding effective consultations between members of the Security Council and countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping operations. We advocate a reasonable increase in the number of open debates of the Council, while recognizing the great importance of closed consultations. The Arria Formula can play a useful role in that regard.

We are convinced that the aim of improving both the transparency and the democratic nature of the Council would be furthered by a better division of responsibilities of the informal leadership of the so-called penholders. We deem unfounded the prevailing opinion that the so-called penholders have some kind of right to always take the floor first when discussing relevant issues. In our opinion, that is justified only when they are introducing draft decisions to the Council and therefore representing them. In all other cases, discussions should be more informal and there should be no so-called mentoring.

In conclusion, I wish again to underscore that no innovation to improve the transparency of the work of the Security Council should harm its effectiveness or decrease its efficiency. Dialogue on this important topic requires a balanced, professional approach without politicization of the substance of the topic being discussed.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. We commend the Permanent Representative of Portugal, Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral, for his dedicated efforts as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We acknowledge the role that the Working Group is playing to advance ways to further enhance the transparency, accountability and overall efficiency of the Council's work.

The interest of the entire international community in the matter under consideration is obvious and arises from the functions of the Security Council. In fulfilling its Charter-mandated obligations, the Council acts on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations and therefore should be duly accountable to them. Almost one year has passed since the Council's last open debate on its working methods (S/PV.6672), at which a number of important issues were raised. During this period, the Council continued to further implement presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) and agreed on several measures to increase interactivity, inclusiveness and efficiency in the internal work of the Council, as eventually reproduced in presidential note 402 of June 2012 (S/2012/402).

More attention has also been paid to achieving a wider participation of Council members in the decision-making process and to improving the existing practice of penholdership and the designation of chairpersons to subsidiary bodies. The Council has also discussed ways and means to enhance its interactivity with non-members and to promote its responsiveness to their inputs and contributions. Unfortunately, obstacles remain, and more should be done to address existing differences. We hope that the Council will take the

initiative and initiate a process of genuine reforms of the Security Council to meet the expectations of the international community.

It should be noted that the reluctance and sometimes even unwillingness to change stereotypes by preserving existing practices complicate the process of reaching agreement on matters of importance to the United Nations membership. The reasons for keeping the Council's current rules of procedure provisional for decades are also self-explanatory. Today's debate on the working methods, procedures and practices that the Security Council applies in fulfilling its Charter-mandated functions represents an excellent opportunity to identify possible short-comings in areas requiring improvement and adjustments.

We welcome the increase in the number of public meetings of the Council, which amounted to more than 145 this year. The quality of this increase certainly depends on the Council's genuine readiness to take into consideration the views and contributions of non-members and regional and subregional organizations, including through the reflection of their proposals and inputs in the outcomes of public meetings. While we stress the importance of close interaction with regional and subregional organizations to facilitating early response to disputes and emerging crises, appropriate steps also need to be taken to improve the quality of briefings as sources of information in an effective early warning and crisis prevention mechanism.

More should be done to further improve in practice the content and narrative quality of the Council's annual reports as a main communication tool between the Council and the general membership. We welcome the efforts of our Colombian colleagues to make the latest annual report more complete and detailed. Among other things, there is a need to include analysis in the monthly reports prepared by the rotating presidencies, which should also contain more information relating to consultations of the whole. The Council should also resort frequently to Arria Formula meetings to ensure more interaction and informal dialogue with the international community, similar to that organized in May on the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, which was open to all Member and observer States, international organizations, academia and civil society.

Another important issue that requires additional efforts is the Council's control over the implementation of its own decisions. It is unacceptable that a resolution of the Security Council containing imperative demands for concrete action should be ignored or interpreted in a way to avoid their implementation. Special attention should be given to situations involving regional arrangements referred by the Security Council with a view to encouraging the development of the peaceful settlement of disputes or conflicts. Needless to say, the silence of the Security Council concerning the apparent disregard of its resolutions on issues pertaining to international and regional peace and security and attempts to undermine them with ambiguous considerations is dangerous and cannot constitute an accepted practice of the Council's working methods.

In conclusion, let me note that the Council must enhance the efficiency and viability of its working methods. Minor changes to the working methods will stimulate and promote general reforms that could be commensurate with contemporary realities. Real improvements should require a change in approach towards the primacy of general and collective interests over national and individual ones.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling today's open debate and for the useful concept note (S/2012/853, annex). We are also very grateful for the work undertaken by the Chairman of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, the Ambassaor of Portugal, as well as for his presentation today.

Germany welcomes the increased efforts of the Council to interact with and seek input from a broad range of relevant actors, including the wider United Nations membership. Open debates, Arria Formula meetings and the holding of interactive dialogues are regularly and successfully used formats to ensure communication and the exchange of information that are vital for the Council's functioning.

Also, the briefings provided by the Department of Political Affairs represent a particularly important improvement, and we call on all Council members to consider conducting one such horizon-scanning during their respective presidencies. We also welcome the increased use of modern technologies, such as video teleconferencing, in enhancing the timeliness and efficiency of the Council's actions.

An interactive and dynamic relationship with a multitude of interlocutors, such as thematic Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, is crucial

to the fulfilment of the Council's mandate, and the interactive dialogue held earlier this year of the Council with the Chairpersons of the Peacebuilding Commission's country configurations clearly highlighted the potential for further cooperation between the two bodies. For example, the participation of the Chairpersons in Council consultations should also be considered, not least to ensure a broader peacebuilding perspective in the Council.

We also support the enhanced involvement of regional organizations in the work of the Council. Those organizations can play a crucial role in furthering conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding in their respective regions, and thus effectively complement the role of the Council. In that regard, I would like to recall the successful high-level meeting held on 26 September on peace and security in the Middle East (S/PV.6841), which focused on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

While much has been achieved to improve the Council's working methods, we are looking forward to the completion of work that is currently in progress. I would therefore like to provide a brief overview of where Germany stands on some of the main points.

Regarding penholderships and chairmanships of subsidiary bodies, we are of the view that all Council members are eligible to fulfil those functions and that elected members should therefore increasingly be assigned penholderships. Germany is currently holding the pen for Afghanistan, as well as the chairmanship of several subsidiary organs. It has been a very positive experience.

Consultations on the appointment of penholders and chairs of subsidiary bodies for the following year should take place soon after the elections of non-permanent members and before the end of the year, and they should be fully inclusive. The mandates of working groups should be flexible and open to necessary adaptations. In that regard, I would like to state that Germany is ready to consider the expansion of the mandate of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals, so as to also include issues relating to States' non-cooperation in the context of the Council's referrals to the International Criminal Court.

On the issue of enhanced interaction in the context of open debates, Germany views such debates as an important opportunity for Council members to benefit from the input of non-member States. We therefore support the early circulation of concept notes to all United Nations Members and the delivery of concluding remarks by the presidency.

Both the Council's annual report and the monthly assessments can be further improved. The presidency responsible for the annual report should continue to consult informally with non-members well ahead of the report's issuance, and report to Council members on the suggestions and expectations raised in those consultations. Since the monthly assessment is prepared under the responsibility of the presidency, it should allow for a more substantive reflection of the presidency's views and analysis of the Council's work during the respective month.

The reform of working methods is part of a larger comprehensive reform. Let me therefore be clear. We must not stop at addressing working methods only. What is required is a structural reform of the Security Council — a reform that makes it more representative of the world we live in today; a reform that lends the decisions taken by the Council more credibility and therefore greater effectiveness. The desire for real, meaningful reform is more evident than ever. An overwhelming majority of Member States small and large, from the developing and the developed world, see true structural reform as the best way forward. Anything else would address only the symptoms and not the root causes.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate. I also thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for setting the scene for our discussion and for his energetic chairing of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

We meet today to discuss how we conduct our business and to listen to the ideas and views of the wider membership. It is an important topic. However, when we consider the question of working methods, Council members must be careful not to give the impression that they are more interested in the process than in the product. The key test of the Security Council will always be its effectiveness at preventing and resolving conflict around the globe. What we do here in New York is important as a forum for discussion and for shaping response to events, but we must not forget that our main responsibility is to make a difference on the ground and to save innocent men, women and children from suffering in conflict.

As the Council endeavours to carry out that solemn duty, I think that two principles need to be balanced in order to guide the methods by which the Council carries out that work. First, the Council should be ruthless in its pursuit of effectiveness. Speed can be crucial in dealing with volatile situations of escalating conflict. We need to be able to come together as a diverse group of nations representing the world and arrive at swift and decisive solutions that can make a difference on the ground.

The United Kingdom has championed several working methods to improve the effectiveness of the Council. We have advocated more use of video teleconferences, which happily have become the new standard in Council consultations. We have secured time and space for the important work of the Council's subsidiary organs, and we have argued that the Council must exercise its responsibility for conflict prevention as well as conflict management. That is why we introduced monthly horizon-scanning sessions, which in the case of Yemen, for example, encouraged the Council to pay closer attention to the early warning signs and provided us with the impetus to take decisive action. I recognize that we have failed to convince all other Council members of the value of that exercise, but I am disappointed not to have heard alternative ideas from the opponents for exercising our conflict prevention responsibilities.

Secondly, the Council needs to be transparent and therefore accountable to the United Nations membership and the wider world. All United Nations Members have a legitimate interest in what the Council is doing — or, indeed, not doing. So it is right that the Council listens to and engages with all other United Nations Members, whether through open debates like this one today or other formats, such as informal dialogues or the Arria Formula meetings that we and other Council members have championed. We also share the view of those who think that the Council's official reporting should be more expansive, more analytical and, where appropriate, more self-critical.

We also need to keep the Council's agenda fresh and up to date. As far as I am aware, not a single new item has been introduced on the formal agenda in the past 18 months. Has the world really been so static during that period? We are in the bizarre situation where the list of items of which the Council is seized includes one regional issue that has not been discussed since 1949 but does not include Syria or Yemen, both of which have been major Council preoccupations during 2012. That is not a good advertisement for the responsiveness and transparency of our procedures. How can we properly be accountable to our members if we cannot even be frank about what is on our agenda?

According to George Bernard Shaw, the golden rule is that there are no golden rules. In today's Council, our rules, practice and precedent provide valuable guides to our work, yet even as we respect the rules set out in the Charter, we must avoid becoming hidebound by past practice and we must be ready to innovate and adapt our procedures to the modern world. That might mean adapting to modern technology by using social media and discarding the requirement to use fax machines. But it also means that the Council must do more to engage with the Members of the United Nations and the people they represent in the Organization.

Finally and fundamentally, it is crucial that the Security Council be as effective as possible in addressing the problems faced by the world today. That requires considering any methods of work that promote well-considered and decisive action in the Security Council.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome India's initiative in convening today's meeting on the working methods of the Security Council. Today's meeting — the fifth open debate convened by the Council on this issue — fully reflects the importance the Council has attached to the issue of improving its working methods and shows the attention the Council gives to the opinions of Member States.

I listened attentively to the statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal, and I wish to acknowledge Portugal's efforts as Chair of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

China also supports, and attaches importance to, the continuous improvement of the Council's working methods so as to enhance the authority, efficiency and transparency of the Council and allow it to better implement the mandate conferred upon it by the Charter of the United Nations. Thanks to the considered efforts of Council members, the Council has made much progress in terms of improving its working methods.

The number of open meetings of the Council has increased significantly. The monthly briefing to non-Council members by the Council's rotating presidency on the monthly programme of work has become a well-established practice. The Security

Council has effectively utilized various formats, such as informal interactive dialogues and Arria Formula meetings, to strengthen its exchange and interaction with relevant Member States, country configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission, civil society and academic institutions. The annual joint meetings between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union have served to strengthen cooperation with regional organizations in Africa. With the assistance of the Secretariat, various information and communication technologies have been extensively applied to the Council's work, allowing it to respond more quickly and promptly to emerging developments and allowing non-Council members to find out about Council activities on a more timely basis. The revamped official website of the Security Council now provides more information to its users.

The Charter of the United Nations provides that the Security Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure. There is still room for improvement with regard to the working methods of the Council. China supports the full implementation of presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) on that issue and supports the continued discussion on concrete proposals and measures. I would like to focus on and highlight the following points.

First, over recent years, the workload of the Council has increased continuously. The Council should focus on using its existing resources effectively and on dealing with major, urgent issues that threaten international peace and security. The number of thematic subjects it addresses has also been increasing continuously. Some of them are beyond the scope of the mandate of the Security Council, and the Council should pay attention to the concern expressed by Member States in that regard.

Secondly, the Security Council should pay more attention to preventive diplomacy and use peaceful means such as mediation and good offices to defuse disputes and should avoid the frequent use or threat of sanctions and other measures of force. An effective mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Council's mandates should be established so as to avoid acts that abuse or overstep them.

Thirdly, before adopting resolutions or agreeing on presidential statements, the Council should carry out, in a full and patient manner, negotiations and consultations so as to reach extensive and broad consensus. In that process, it is important that all Council members be given adequate time to consider and study texts. The Council should avoid forcing through texts over which there remain serious differences, so as to safeguard the solidarity of the Council.

Fourthly, the Security Council should continue to strengthen its interaction and dialogue with non-Council members and pay more attention to the opinions of relevant Member States that are connected to the Council's agenda. We support the full utilization by the Council of various mechanisms such as the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and meetings with troop-contributing countries (TCCs). With regard to deploying peacekeeping operations and adjusting their mandates, more attention should be given to communication between TCCs and the Secretariat.

Fifthly, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission should fully respect the division of labour, on the one hand, and strengthen the communication and coordination among them, on the other. China supports the Council's efforts in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations such as the African Union and the League of Arab States so as to achieve synergy.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): We join others in felicitating you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate. We also appreciate the concept note prepared by the delegations of Portugal and India (S/2012/853, annex).

Pakistan associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement later in the debate.

We thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for his leadership and the members of the Portuguese delegation for their efficient conduct of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Ambassador Moraes Cabral has highlighted some of the important achievements of the Working Group. The delegation of Pakistan actively contributed to that collective effort.

Improving the Council's working methods is an integral part of comprehensive reform of the Security Council, which is a shared objective of the entire United Nations membership. It is encouraging to note the enhanced attention to working methods in the Council itself. The organization of open debates such as this is a manifestation of the importance that the Council attaches to this issue, as well as of the keen interest

that it generates among the general membership. We should reinforce that trend. Such discussions will translate into tangible benefits only through effective follow-up. The Council should further deliberate on practicable suggestions flowing from this debate with a view to their operationalization. The Working Group's role is of continuous relevance in that regard. The implementation of presidential note S/2010/507 is a work in progress. In our view, such implementation should incorporate and formalize additional substantive aspects of working methods, while also reviewing the status of the measures already integrated.

We would like to focus on three principal aspects of the debate.

First, transparency, democracy and inclusion are fundamental to improving the Council's working methods. Pakistan believes that the advancement of those principles will enhance the Council's accountability to the general membership.

Secondly, the importance of working methods is not merely a procedural matter. In fact, the issues involved, particularly with regard to the decision-making process, cut across the entire substantive agenda of the Council, including the work of its subsidiary bodies. It is not surprising, therefore, that the general membership perceives that it has a direct stake in the question.

Thirdly, improving the working methods will also enhance the Council's efficiency. However, the effectiveness of the Council and, in turn, its credibility is more a function of its members' political will and of the implementation of its decisions and resolutions. We welcome the additional measures on conference resources and interactivity agreed in the presidential note of 5 June 2012 (S/2012/402). Spreading out the Council's periodic workload more evenly throughout the year, where possible, and on a case-by-case basis can also improve planning. The Secretariat's efforts to enhance the availability of information and data, including through the Council's website, are especially laudable.

Allow me to point out some of the areas in which little or slow progress necessitates further concerted efforts.

First, in terms of transparency, there is a need to give real meaning to rule 48 of the provisional rules of procedure, which provides that "[u]nless it decides otherwise, the Security Council shall meet in public". Closed consultations should be kept to a minimum as the exception they were meant to be.

Inside the Council, the decision-making process should be more transparent and inclusive. That entails involvement and consultations with all members, adequate time for the consideration of issues and proper negotiations on Council decisions. The tendency to push decisions with a take-it-or-leave-it approach should be eschewed. Pakistan supports the Working Group's ongoing discussions aimed at enhancing the transparency and inclusivity of the penholder practice, as well as of the appointment of Chairs of subsidiary bodies, since they is closely related to that objective.

To improve access and participation for non-Council members, we should fully implement Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, within the context both of the work of the Council and that of its subsidiary bodies. Arria Formula meetings and informal interactive dialogues offer additional mechanisms for interaction with non-members and other actors. It is pertinent that the presidential note 402 also specifically commits to enhancing interaction with non-Council members and seeking their views. An important aspect of interaction with non-Council members is ensuring that their views are factored into the Council's deliberations, decision-making and outcomes. Pakistan also supports measures aimed at enhancing the interactivity of open debates, including alternating statements by Council and non-Council members.

Given the central role of peacekeeping in the Council's work, we believe it is essential to have more enhanced, substantive and regular interaction and consultation with troop-contributing countries. The Council should also further strengthen its consultation and cooperation with regional organizations and be more coherent and consistent in its approach, in order to make such cooperation more effective.

The Council should rely more on the pacific settlement of disputes, as outlined in Chapter VI of the Charter.

In order to enhance information exchange and outreach related to the Council's work, its presidencies could be more proactive, including by interacting, as required, with non-Council members, the media, the Secretariat, and with the Secretary-General's Special Envoys and Representatives. Interaction between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Council is also important.

With regard to sanctions committees, we are of the view that recent best practices, particularly the institution of an Ombudsperson for the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011), merit consideration for other committees. It is also essential that the process of selecting and appointing the various expert groups be made more transparent, balanced and representative.

In the interest of its overall efficiency and effectiveness, the Council should devote more time and effort to the core issues of international peace and security, in accordance with its primary responsibility, and refrain from encroaching on the mandates of other bodies.

Over the years, non-permanent members have made important contributions to improving the working methods of the Council. That is understandable, since non-permanent members, because they are elected, have a sense of accountability to the wider membership and share the general sentiment on the need to improve the Council's working methods. Conversely, the empirical evidence shows no correlation between the permanent seats and improved working methods. Adding new permanent members therefore is not likely to change that pattern. The understanding and cooperation of permanent members is nonetheless also important in that process. And it is true that, more recently, permanent members have also tried to reach out to wider audiences.

In conclusion, it is in our common interests to improve the working methods of the Security Council. We should therefore continue to pursue that objective collectively and vigorously.

Mr. Kandangha-Bariki (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on the question of the Security Council's working methods, the fifth such meeting on this subject and one that the Members of the United Nations as a whole consider more and more important. I am also grateful to Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral of Portugal for the outstanding work he has done as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as well as for the detailed briefing he has just given us.

The presidential note of 7 February 2006 (S/2006/507), modified by the Security Council on 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507), covers the main topics that the Informal Working Group has had to discuss and that are of major interest to the Council. The Group is working with resolve and determination to achieve good results, since the question of the reform of the Council's working methods has been a focus of the concerns of Heads of State and Government since the 2005 World Summit, at which they actually made a recommendation on the subject (General Assembly resolution 60/1). Many efforts have been made since then within the Council itself, but we must recognize that there is still a long way to go before we reach the goals that signify greater transparency and efficiency in the Council's work. That is why, since the open debate of 30 November 2011 (see S/PV.6672), the Informal Working Group has focused its action on new issues, while still attempting to ensure the effective implementation of those it compiled in presidential note 507.

The consideration of those new issues has resulted recommendations on various equally important issues. What emerges is that the good use of conference resources and a judicious reordering of mandate renewal periods throughout the year not only save the Organization money but also reduce the workload for Council members during certain months of the year.

On other questions such as that of the people we term penholders, and of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies, my delegation has always believed that transparency, inclusivity and flexibility should govern actions in that regard so as to enable all members to participate effectively and efficiently in drafting resolutions and in the process of designating the Chairs of subsidiary bodies. We hope that the Council will take decisions on such questions as soon as possible, in order to improve its work.

The interaction between the Council and other organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, is a question that has always come up when we discuss the issue of reform. In that regard, the increasing number of open debates, which allow non-Council-member States to share common concerns in a spirit of complementarity and responsibility, is commendable. Some delegations have proposed, in that connection, that the documents the Council adopts at the end of such open debates reflect the positions expressed in those debates, which would mean delaying their adoption. While sharing such concerns, we believe that we should not throw out the baby with the bathwater, since the adoption of such documents would be subject to intense negotiations with non-members,

which is not always guaranteed to succeed and could lead to blockages that would affect the desired result.

My delegation would also like to welcome the dialogue that has begun between the Council and other organizations or entities in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. Such informal interactive dialogues, such as those that took place this year with the delegations of the Economic Community of West African States on Togo's initiative, and with the African Union on the crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, have the advantage of enabling direct exchanges aimed at deciding on the best action to undertake. Such praiseworthy initiatives must be continued, as should the holding of Arria Formula meetings and meetings for the exchange of information and views with troop — and police-contributing countries.

The meeting held this year between the members of the Security Council and the heads of peacekeeping missions around the world was very significant and should become established practice (see S/PV.6789).

Another topic we continue to follow is cooperation between the Council and regional and subregional organizations. In the context of subsidiarity, under Chapter VIII of the Charter, such meetings are of increasing interest at a time when regional organizations such as the African Union are making greater efforts to seek solutions to conflicts both within and between States. We firmly encourage the continuation of that practice and of exchanges with the Peacebuilding Commission, which should be held more regularly.

There are many areas where the Security Council must improve its working methods. They are all equally important, so I will not list them now. What reassures us most is that the Council, which is master of its own agenda, has taken note of the importance of this subject and is tackling it. A great deal of time will be required to adopt all the measures needed in that regard, and even more time to put them into practice. The enthusiasm characterizing the discussion and adoption of measures to improve working methods is lacking when it comes to their implementation. It is in there that more work needs to be done, because it is useless to decide upon something without implementing it.

What is certain is that the road ahead is long and that we need to continue to work together, with external and internal stakeholders, to reach the laudable goal of reforming the working methods of the Security Council, which would enable this principle organ of the United Nations to be more transparent and credible.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this thematic debate on the working methods of the Council. This annual gathering is of particular importance, as it offers the opportunity to the United Nations membership as a whole not only to evaluate the Council's efforts to provide greater transparency, effectiveness and inclusiveness in its work, but also to make proposals and comments to contribute to the progress of the Council's work in this area. We would like to thank the Indian and Portuguese delegations for the joint concept note (S/2012/853, annex) they submitted for the present debate, which will facilitate our consideration of the topic.

The Charter has conferred upon the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The importance of that mandate and its impact on a large majority of Member States explain and justify their following of, and involvement in, the Council's activities and work, which are no longer limited to traditional situations of war and peace but now touch on complex issues such as terrorism and nuclear non-proliferation. While the Council has certainly taken important steps over the years both to improve the effectiveness of its work and to open itself to non-member States, in particular through the adoption of presidential note 507 (S/2012/507), optimizing the effectiveness and transparency of the Council calls for continued effort. In that regard, my delegation would like to make the following comments and observations.

First, I wish to pay tribute to Mr. José Filipe Moraes Cabral, Ambassador of Portugal, who has undeniably breathed new life into the work of the Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. He will leave an indelible mark on the work of that Group. Traditionally, the workload of the Council was spread unevenly throughout the year, with a heavier programme of work in June and December. The Council has managed to make some slight changes to the dates for the renewal of mandates and the publication of reports of the Secretary-General and of the various committees so as to distribute them evenly throughout the whole year. That has helped to reduce the pressure on the Secretariat.

The Council has taken a number of steps to make better use of the resources at its disposal, including

consulting on two topics during the same meeting. That has allowed for budgetary savings, which have been redistributed to the subsidiary bodies of the Council. We support the Council's use of new information technologies, in particular videoconferencing for ad hoc briefings. The Council can make use of many formats for its meetings. We note that the number of public meetings is on the rise. We remain of the view that the format chosen for each meeting should take into account the sensitivity and the nature of the topic at hand and the context in which its consideration is planned.

Open debates strengthen the interactions and relationships between the Security Council and the Member States and regional organizations. We believe that such debates should have a specific scope and focus on specific topics. The Council should take full advantage in its deliberations of the views and proposals expressed by the Member States, which must be afforded adequate time to prepare for such debates.

The Council should also make optimal use of its interactions with countries contributing police and troops to peacekeeping operations when discussing or renewing their mandates. The same goes for the Peacebuilding Commission and its various country-specific configurations, which should be systematically invited to participate in the work of the Council in order to take into full account their contributions and proposals.

Informational meetings for Member States and the press on the programme of work, which are organized on a monthly basis by the Council presidency, are an excellent opportunity to discuss the Council's daily work and the aims and priorities of each presidency. Greater participation by Member States in those meetings would strengthen their relevance.

Stronger cooperation has been established between the Council and a number of regional organizations. We cannot but welcome that. We note, for example, that the Council is interacting to a greater degree with the League of Arab States and that a presidential statement was adopted in September, under the German presidency, calling for the strengthening of that partnership (S/PRST/2012/20). The Council could also reaffirm its cooperation with other regional and subregional organizations. Subregional organizations have shown that they can play an important role alongside the Council in solving recent crises affecting their respective regions.

The annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/67/2) has undergone several improvements in terms of both format and content. Seeking the opinions of Member States prior to the drafting of the report is a practice that should be continued and strengthened.

Subsidiary bodies and working groups now occupy an important place in the work of the Council, and their chairs take on a heavy workload. Elected members of the Council should, before being allocated chairmanships, have the opportunity to express their choice and preference regarding their desired role.

Finally, we note with satisfaction the work of the Security Council Affairs Division, in particular the setting up the Council website in the six official languages of the United Nations. The website contains comprehensive and up-to-date information on the Council's activities and those of its subsidiary bodies. We strongly support that effort.

The increased participation in today's debate, which has been underscored by most of my colleagues, clearly shows the interest that all Member States have in the Council's work. Improving the working methods of the Council should remain a work in progress. We believe that effort at improvement should be followed up through a periodic review of presidential note 507 and more effective participation by Council members in that undertaking.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Indian presidency for convening this now annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council. I would also like to thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

The Council determines its agenda and its procedures. They are provisional and enable practice to vary according to needs. That is to the Council's advantage, which can adapt itself to new requirements. The review in 2010 contained in the annex to presidential note S/2010/507 on the Council's good practices clarifies our working methods. On that basis, I will make two observations.

First of all, there have been efforts to improve the Council's working methods. In particular, the public nature and transparency of debates have been enhanced. I would like to cite four examples.

First, the majority of Council meetings are now public or include a public part. On matters of general interest, we believe that the open debate formula should prevail. We would like in particular to hear more often from the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Chamber, rather than in consultations.

Secondly, at the initiative of France and the United Kingdom, there is now a regular dialogue with countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping operations. With the help of all interested delegations, we must now ensure the greater substance of such dialogue.

Thirdly, the President of the Council regularly meets the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Chairs of its country-specific configurations who are invited to participate in Council debates.

Lastly, thanks to the revamped Council website and regularly updated documents on all mandates and operations, the President and the Secretariat provide all members and officials of the Organization with the information that they need on the work of the Council in all official languages.

There have been further developments this year. In 2012, the Informal Working Group discussed the recommendations put forward by States in the course of the open debate held in November 2011 (see S/PV.6672). That shows our concern in listening to the ideas of all States. Points of agreement were found on the better use of Council resources and greater interactivity in its consultations.

My second observation is that we can continue to make progress and to be innovative. First, we need to better use the tools available to us. By way of example, I should like to refer to field missions that enable Council members to engage with local actors. It is appropriate to draw greater advantage from such missions by defining our objectives more specifically and by ensuring that there is follow-up to the conclusions drawn from such deployments.

Secondly, the Council now regularly holds exchanges with the Department of Political Affairs on threatening situations that justify particular attention. All ow us to recall that through that practice the Council was first able to consider the situation in Mali. In that way, the Council has the means to better anticipate and prevent crises.

Thirdly, we must ensure consistency in our consideration of, and action on, thematic resolutions and geographic agenda items. In that regard, we agree with the recommendations of the group of five small nations on increasing the link between the work of the Security Council on thematic issues, namely, the rule of law, combating impunity, the protection of civilians and emerging situations, and its action on specific situations. The Council has adopted an ambitious framework regarding the protection of civilians, children in armed conflict and combating gender-based violence in conflict situations. We must implement such principles in the context of geographical resolutions. Our annual report does not reflect the total synergy of those two approaches.

In the same spirit, France believes that the sanctions regimes should be applied more systematically to persons subject to arrest warrants of international criminal jurisdiction or the leading perpetrators of acts of piracy.

Fourthly, as I already pointed out in the open debate convened by Guatemala on 17 October (see S/PV.6849), France supports the permanent members of the C ›uncil voluntarily and jointly foregoing the use of the veto in situations under the Council's consideration in which mass atrocities are being committed and, more generally, which pertain to the responsibility to protect.

Finally, as the Council has drawn up new meeting formats that facilitate better exchanges with the United Nations membership and other actors under Arria Formula meetings or interactive dialogues, it seems to us appropriate to amend the mandates of the Working Groups of the Council when new issues emerge. That could be done in a dynamic and flexible way. As we discussed on 17 October, I would particularly like to see the 15 Council members consider developing a broader mandate for the informal working group on ad hoc tribunals.

In conclusion, we encourage the future Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to draw working proposals from this open debate, as Ambassador Moraes Cabral has done in the course of this year.

Mr. Laher (South Africa): We thank you, Mr. President, for your excellent initiative in continuing this important debate and for jointly preparing the concept paper on working methods (see S/2012/853, annex) together with Portugal in its capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered later this morning by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran in its capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The past few years have seen greater demands by the global community for democracy, transparency and accountability. That has translated into positive changes in many Member States. The Security Council cannot remain immune to such complexities of a changing international environment. To remain relevant, the reform of the Council in both its composition and its working methods remain one of the key priorities of the United Nations.

We have seen some progress by the Security Council in responding to those new demands through an increasing focus on improving its working methods. In that regard, presidential note S/2010/507 continues to be a key commitment in order to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work. The consistent implementation of its provisions must therefore remain central to the Council's work for ensuring greater accountability. The challenge is to ensure that those measures are made permanent. Those reforms, as well as the provisional rules of procedures, should become permanent so that the Council can have predictable rules that can be followed.

As its decisions affect Member States outside the Council, its work and decisions can benefit from the views of all Member States. South Africa welcomes the continuing progress in increasing the number of public meetings and the greater frequency of public briefings by special envoys and special representatives. It is also worth noting that briefings to the general membership by the incoming and outgoing Presidents of the Council are becoming standard practice. We commend the work of the Secretariat in publishing documents on the mandate cycles and on revamping the Council's website. Those developments increase transparency in the work of the Council.

The Council's outreach has also expanded through the work of its subsidiary bodies. As Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, South Africa has endeavoured to involve the broader membership and non-State entities in the discussions on the Group's agenda by opening up its meetings. We are of the view that other subsidiary bodies of the Council could also benefit from such engagement. In that regard, we welcome the initiative of the Sanctions Committees on Somalia and Eritrea and on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, to engage the relevant stakeholders and Member States in its deliberations.

An encouraging development has been the use of the informal interactive dialogue, which has allowed the Council to interact informally with individual Member States, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and subregional and regional organizations. In our view, given the linkages between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the Council has benefited tremendously from its increased interaction with the PBC. Given the advisory role of the Commission, however, that interaction should translate into the views of the PBC being reflected when the mandates of peacekeeping missions are considered.

Equally, interaction with troop-contributing countries (TCCs) has been on the increase and has been scheduled well in advance of Council meetings. However, we could benefit from more meaningful and substantive engagement during such meetings, in particular as TCCs are often directly affected by decisions of the Council. The Council's request in resolution 2076 (2012) that the Secretary-General consult with troop — and police-contributing countries to the the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a welcome development.

While those are modest measures, they continue to be important steps towards improving the work of the Council and ensuring greater transparency and accountability. More needs to be done to ensure that those developments translate into substantive and meaningful engagement between the Council and the general membership.

Field visits by members of the Security Council continue to be an important vehicle for the Council's understanding of the situation on the ground and for its ability to make informed decisions. During the past year, visits to Haiti, West Africa and Timor-Leste were beneficial and helped the Council in carrying out its mandate effectively. Equally, visits by Chairs of subsidiary bodies enhance the outreach of such vital bodies. Given the usefulness of such visits, including mini-missions, the Council may wish to consider increased field visits, as well as by Chairs of subsidiary bodies. However, South Africa was disappointed that the Council was not able to visit key regions on its

agenda, such as the Middle East, in spite of formal invitations and the overwhelming support of Council members for such visits.

In our experience, elected members of the Council are confronted by numerous constraints that result from the current configuration, which affords dominance and permanence to the non-elected members. That dominance is experienced at the very start of one's tenure on the Council when the five permanent members allocate the chairmanships of the subsidiary bodies without themselves chairing any — and with little or no consultation with the members concerned. It further permeates the daily work of the Council as three permanent members are penholders on almost every country-specific issue on the Council's agenda. We are encouraged by the efforts of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the able stewardship of Ambassador Moraes Cabral, to promote greater transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness in the appointment of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies, penholdership, the preparation of the annual report and monthly assessments. Those efforts must be continued and further enhanced.

In addition, we remain concerned that resolutions and decisions of the Council are often drafted in small groups and presented as faits accomplis to elected members. While we support broad consultation by the Council, its decisions should be open to debate among all members of the Council.

In responding to an increasingly complex and changing world, the Council has become increasingly reliant on regional and subregional organizations that are playing a direct role in conflict prevention, resolution and management. South Africa is particularly pleased with the enhanced strategic cooperation between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council, specifically in connection with the adoption of resolution 2033 (2012). The positive impact of that strategic coordination is evidenced in the subsequent adoption of resolution 2046 (2012), concerning the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as the adoption of resolution 2036 (2012), which authorized an increase in the troop levels of the African Union Mission in Somalia. The ongoing consultation between the Council and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, which is playing a leadership role in resolving post-Comprehensive Peace Agreement issues, continues to benefit the Council in addressing the matter.

South Africa is also pleased that the annual consultation between the Council and the Peace and Security Council has become more structured and effective. In that regard, we are of the view that greater strategic coordination between the United Nations and the African Union will enhance the effectiveness of the Council in addressing challenges to peace and security on the African continent. We are confident that the continued cooperation and unity between the two Councils could be of immense benefit with respect to addressing the challenges we face in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau and Mali and the widerSahel region.

In spite of those positive developments, my delegation remains concerned about the tendency in some cases whereby the Council is selective in picking elements of decisions of regional organizations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, that advance the national interests of some members. It is important that the principle of subsidiarity be respected if we are to establish better synergies in enhancing cooperation, especially on the African continent. We therefore call for greater consistency from the Council in engaging with regional bodies.

As a means of concretely fostering cooperation, South Africa encourages the President of the Council to interact regularly with the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council on issues on the agendas of both Councils. The two Councils could further benefit from more interaction and substantive discussion on a regular basis. In that regard, the use of video technology could successfully be deployed to regularize such interaction between the two Councils.

In conclusion, whereas the debate on working methods could be mistakingly considered as a mere technical matter, it continues to be a political debate dependent upon the political will of its members. As such, the Council should continue to work towards increasing and improving its transparency and accountability, thereby ensuring greater effectiveness and legitimacy in its work. In responding to an ever-changing world, the Council and its working methods cannot remain static. They must adapt to ensure greater legitimacy and effectiveness. Cosmetic changes to the working methods do not advance the fundamental need for a reform of the Council and the expansion of its membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We must therefore speed up the reform of

the Council if we are to avoid further erosion of the legitimacy and credibility of this organ.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on the issue of the Council's working methods. I would also like to thank you for the concept note you have circulated to inform our debate (S/2012/853, annex). We trust that our deliberations will make it possible to renew the commitment to continue to move forward with improving the efficiency, transparency and interactivity of the Security Council. I would also like especially to thank the Permanent Representative of Portugal for his statement and for his work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

We acknowledge the progress that has been made with regard to some of the Council's practices, as well as in connection with improving new measures set out in presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) and subsequent such notes. In that regard, the progress made in the Informal Working Group this year and the measures that have been adopted to improve internal aspects of the Council's work, including the establishment of a new web page in the six official languages, are all commendable. Nevertheless, we believe that there is still room for improvement. In that connection, I should like to highlight some practices that we believe should be improved or more systematically carried out. I should mention that I will be guided by the concept note, insofar as I shall not revisit the great number of items that we have discussed in the past — and will continue to discuss — under the rubric of working methods of the Council.

First, I should like to mention the importance that we attach to the regular consideration of the items on the Council's agenda. In that connection, I should like thank the Secretariat for the broad perspective encompassed by document published on 1 November on the mandates and publication cycles of Security Council reports. The practices of spacing the renewal of mandates, grouping meetings by theme and streamlining requests for reports are not only common sense; they have also demonstrated their utility. That is a specific measure that we support, as it benefits Council Presidents, experts negotiating draft resolutions and the Secretariat itself.

We trust that this exercise will continue to be implemented in an orderly and well-planned fashion. We believe that to that end greater account must be taken of the work done by other bodies, such as the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, in considering budget adoptions for peacekeeping operations. Regarding requests for reports, we heard what the Secretariat said about wanting more specific requests, particularly with respect to the spacing, content and scope of reports.

Presidential note 507 provides us with a number of measures, including the possibility of reviewing certain paragraphs in the light of the criteria that we are continuing to elaborate in terms of spacing out mandate renewals, grouping meetings by theme and streamlining requests for reports.

Secondly, we would as a priority continue to improve the interaction between the chairs of subsidiary bodies, that is, Committees and informal working groups, with all Member States. In particular, we deem necessary the development of a mechanism for interaction with those Member States that are to hold such chairmanships, particularly those that are joining the Council for the first time, so that they not only have the opportunity to voice their preferences but are also enabled better to prepare for their roles and work.

We support an informal process in which all Council members participate that is efficient, transparent and inclusive and that would facilitate the exchange of information on the work done by subsidiary organs. We believe that recently elected members must be consulted immediately following their election. The Informal Working Group is considering proposals to that end, and we trust that it will be possible to approve as soon as possible a President's note on that issue.

Thirdly, we wish to highlight the importance of public meetings and the usefulness of open debates, which promote greater participation of non-members of the Council, with measures that include ensuring that Member States are given enough time to prepare useful contributions; increasing interactivity, by inviting non-Council members to alternate their statements with those of Council members; and promoting more focused contributions, for instance through the preparation of concept notes and, where possible, following up on relevant contributions made by participants after the holding of an open debate. In that respect, I would recall that four open debates were held under the presidency of Guatemala, in October.

My fourth and final point concerns the need for closer cooperation between the Council on the one

hand and regional and subregional organizations on the other with respect to the management of crises and armed conflicts. It is important to increase the number of Security Council consultations held with regional and subregional organizations playing an active role in crisis resolution and the settlement of armed conflicts, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, especially when the Council is acting under Chapter VII of the Charter. That would ensure greater efficiency in the short, medium and long terms with respect to finding lasting solutions to crises.

We deem it important to continue to be innovative and to adopt other measures, with the necessary political will on the part of Member States, particularly the permanent members, in order to improve the working methods of the Security Council. Transparency, accountability and consistency are key elements that must obtain for the Security Council in all of its activities, approaches and procedures.

There is no doubt that improving the working methods of the Council would contribute to strengthening its capacity to maintain international peace and security and to administer efficiently and effectively its growing workload and the multiplicity and complexity of the items on its agenda.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): The United States welcomes today's discussion, and we thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for his diligent work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Under the United Nations Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility in the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. To fulfil this most critical of mandates, the Council must continually strive to improve its working methods, with a focus on enhancing its effectiveness and optimizing transparency. The Council must be able to act quickly and with a high level of flexibility, and we have already taken some notable steps in that direction, such as our quick turnaround meetings this month to discuss the situations in Gaza and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We should build on this, while remaining mindful that Article 30 of the Charter mandates the Council to adopt its own rules of procedure.

The Council has also increased the accessibility of its work to Member States and the public. Last year, less than 10 per cent of the Council's meetings were private, compared with almost 30 per cent in 2002 — a very good trend. The monthly assessments produced by Council Presidents provide the broader United Nations membership with a regular snapshot of the Council's work. In addition, we intend to propose that the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions hold open meetings, similar to those we already hold for the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning Counter-Terrorism, the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the sanctions Committees. Such meetings would allow the Chairman to explain the Group's mandate to Member States and to provide another forum to hear views on working methods.

In July, the Council President traditionally meets with Member States to solicit views on the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. The United States, as Council President for July 2013, looks forward to continuing that practice and to receiving suggestions on ways to enhance the report.

The United States values the participation of all Member States in the Council's open debates, such as the one today, and in the our various informal discussions, as well as in country — or region-specific meetings and informal processes such as groups of friends. In the past, we have also welcomed the chairs of country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission, subsidiary bodies and sanctions committees to brief the Council or participate in discussions. Such important interaction helps the Council mitigate, or, hopefully, prevent, the recurrence of the conflicts on our agenda, and also consider new threats. Arria Formula meetings, such as the Council's session with the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, are an important tool for us to hear the views of interested Member States and of civil society. We should look for ways to discuss more issues in this manner.

While the Council's formal meetings make headlines, much of our work occurs outside the Chamber, especially in negotiations on the Council's resolutions and statements. On these, Council members should consider carefully the views of other Member States, including those expressed in letters to the Council, and consult with concerned States about the content of Council products.

Beyond greater transparency and interactivity, we must keep working to make the Council more effective. Increased use of video teleconferencing has provided the Council with better, more timely information

on existing and emerging conflicts, enabling the Council to maintain its vital role in early warning and conflict prevention. In 2009, the Council held one video teleconference; in 2011, we held 26. In addition, comprehensive mandates designed by the Council, such as those supporting the safety and security of women and children, have proven valuable in resolving conflict and assisting stability and recovery in post-conflict situations.

Indeed, a more effective Security Council must remain our collective goal. Increased transparency on the participation of the Council and its engagement with the broader United Nations membership can support that goal, but proposals must be carefully assessed to ensure that transparency and effectiveness are mutually reinforcing, and not at cross-purposes.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of India.

At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral, Permanent Representative of Portugal, and his delegation for co-authoring with my delegation the concept note for today's open debate (S/2012/853, annex). I would also like to put on record our deep appreciation of Ambassador Moraes Cabral's stewardship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions this year. His active involvement and guidance have enabled the Working Group to consider several issues related to the Council's working methods in order to promote transparency and the greater involvement of elected members in the Council's work.

The Security Council is mandated by the United Nations Charter with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. What the Council does and how it acts to discharge its responsibility is thus of interest to the entire international community, not only to Council members, let alone the permanent members.

Over the years, there has been a growing realization that the Council's composition, rooted in the situation obtaining in 1945, and its working methods are divorced from contemporary reality of international relations. This is exemplified by the fact that the Council has shown little interest in consulting with those affected most by its decisions and in adopting transparent and inclusive rules of procedures that remain provisional even after the Council's existence for six and a half decades. The Council has also not acted to harness the capabilities of the wider United Nations membership. Its all-too-evident eagerness to apply methods of coercion under Chapter VII, to the neglect of provisions under Chapters VI and VIII, has proved to be counter-productive in resolving several crises, even while the Council has sought to expand the definition of peace and security with a view to encroaching upon the Charter-mandated roles of other United Nations organs.

Let me briefly share India's perspective on how the Security Council could better its performance. First, the permanent members of the Security Council must recognize, not only individually but also collectively, that the Council must be reformed to make it reflect the contemporary realities of the international system. Secondly, the international community as a whole must be cognizant that enlarging the Security Council to reflect contemporary geopolitical realities would improve its representative character and grant greater legitimacy and credibility to its decisions. Thirdly, there is a need for real improvement in its working methods to enhance the Council's effectiveness and efficiency. Cosmetic changes to working methods alone will not help. Real improvement needs changes in both process and approach, which require reform of the composition of the Council.

Insofar as the working methods of the Council are concerned, the first and foremost necessity is to make them transparent and inclusive. Access to documentation and information is an issue of particular concern, and the tendency to hold closed meetings that have no records should be curbed. During the past two years, we have strongly supported efforts in the Informal Working Group aimed at improving Council's working methods. Some specific points include the following.

First, the Council should amend its procedures so that items do not remain on its agenda permanently.

Second, the reporting cycle should be practical and results-oriented so that issues do not come for consideration so routinely as to bog down the limited time that the Council has at its disposal.

Third, the mandate cycle should be streamlined to spread the Council's work throughout the year.

Fourth, Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter must be fully implemented by consulting with non-Security Council members on a regular basis, especially members with a special interest in a substantive matter under the Council's consideration.

Fifth, penholders should allow the greater and systematic participation of elected members as co-penholders.

Sixth, non-members should be given systematic access to subordinate organs of the Security Council, including the right to participate.

Seventh, the participation of troop- and police-contributing countries in decision-making concerning peacekeeping operations must cover the establishment, conduct, review and termination of peacekeeping operations, including the extension and change of mandates, as well as for specific operational issues.

Eighth, countries having a specific interest in a particular agenda-item must be consulted before an outcome document on that item is adopted.

Ninth, the Council should concentrate its time and efforts on dealing with issues concerning its primary responsibility with regard to international peace and security as mandated by the United Nations Charter, rather than encroach upon the mandate of the General Assembly.

Tenth, before mandating measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council should first make serious efforts to achieve pacific settlements of disputes through measures under Chapter VI. In this connection, the Council must also improve its cooperation with regional organizations, particularly the African Union (AU), since a large volume of the Council's work concerns the African continent. Such cooperation must be serious and include providing assistance for the AU's capacity-building, as per its requirements, not only when some permanent members deem it in their interest.

It is our expectation that these ideas will be pursued by Council members in the coming months so that the views expressed by the wider United Nations membership find resonance in the Council's work and working methods.

In conclusion, let me reiterate India's considered view that genuine reform of the working methods of the Security Council requires a comprehensive reform of the membership of the Council, with expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories, not only improvement in its working procedures. This is essential both to the credibility and to the continued confidence of the international community in this institution.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Before I invite speakers under rule 37, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil): I thank you, Sir, for convening this important open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. We also thank you for circulating the concept note that guides our discussion today (S/2012/853, annex). And we take this opportunity to thank Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral for his briefing and to congratulate him on his commitment to increased transparency and openness on the part of the Council.

Brazil has been a long-standing supporter of measures to promote the transparency, inclusiveness and accessibility of the Council to the wider membership. We actively worked to further this goal during our most recent term in this body, including when we held its presidency in February 2011.

There is a strong desire on the part of Member States to be better informed about the Council's deliberations. The call for a less opaque Council was once again reiterated in the General Assembly during the recent discussion of the Security Council's annual report to that body (A/67/2). There is, in particular, a wide recognition of the need to promote closer ties between the Security Council and the General Assembly. We would welcome more frequent interactive briefings and the presentation of special reports, in line with the relevant Articles of the United Nations Charter. The Council should also consider mechanisms to follow up on suggestions made by non-members during the debate of its report to the General Assembly.

We welcome recent initiatives to enhance the relationship between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The informal interactive dialogue held in July, under the Colombian presidency, brought up interesting suggestions on how the Council could benefit from the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission. However, there is much room for improvement. We encourage a dialogue between the Council and the country-specific configurations on

a regular basis and in the context of the renewal of mandates.

We commend the recent steps taken by the Council to strengthen its relationship with regional and international organizations, including through their active participation in open debates.

It is important that the presidency of the Council hold informational briefings, not only at the beginning of its monthly work, but also at the end of each presidency in the format of wrap-up sessions. Brazil and Portugal recently held such meetings, which we hope will soon become a regular practice. The growing availability of information on the Council's website, including on mandate cycles, is also positive.

The same should apply to the Council's subsidiary organs. Informative and interactive briefings with Member States have the potential to add transparency to their activities, while offering an opportunity to all interested delegations to provide input to the work of those bodies.

Another issue that stands out as an important part of the discussion on working methods is the question of the interpretation and implementation of the Council's decisions. In many circumstances, especially when the use of force is authorized, objective parameters should be established. This would be indispensable to increasing the accountability and effectiveness of the Council's decisions and avoiding the loose interpretation of mandates.

Finally, allow me to stress that improving the working methods is only a part of the broader need to adapt the Security Council to the new international reality. We reiterate our view that only a real reform of the Council's structure will make this body more representative, transparent, efficient and legitimate. It is our hope that Member States will, sooner rather than later, take steps to promote a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, with an enlargement in both categories of membership.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liecthenstein): We commend Portugal and Ambassador Moraes Cabral for their work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. They have shown outstanding leadership, and we are grateful to them for the work that they have done.

The past years have seen some modest but important improvements in the practice of the Council. The annex to the presidential note contained in document S/2010/507 is a set of measures that the Council itself has agreed to take in order to better serve the interests of the wider membership, as well as its own. More than two years since it was issued, however, the full and consistent implementation of these measures remains elusive. The Working Group has continued its commendable efforts. At the same time, progress remains limited and slow.

A key issue for discussion at this time of year is the more equal distribution of work between the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council as it prepares for a new year in a new composition. We hope that genuine consultations will lead to a good distribution of work in the subsidiary bodies, and we certainly believe that the work of the Council would benefit if non-permanent members were given a more active role in the drafting of draft resolutions and decisions.

We also look forward to improvements in the format of the open debates of the Council. This could perhaps be a topic for the Working Group to take up early next year.

We value the work of the Working Group, but are also realistic about its scope and potential, which are focused mostly on the implementation of note 507. But we must also advance discussions beyond that.

The point of reference for this discussion is, to our mind, draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2, which was submitted to the General Assembly this spring by Costa Rica, Jordan, Singapore, Switzerland and ourselves — a group known as the group of five small nations. That draft resolution dealt with enhancing the accountability, transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council, the goals on which the Council needs to make tangible progress, as we all agreed in 2005.

The draft resolution received, as is well known, considerable support among the membership of the United Nations, to the point that we are asked to this day why it was withdrawn instead of being put to a vote. While this is certainly not the place to discuss the reasons, we would like to recall the annex to the draft resolution, which should serve as a yardstick in our discussions on the Council's working methods. It continues to reflect the agenda that the Security Council should deal with, according to the membership that

it represents. This is true even for most of those who were not willing to support the draft resolution, as they advanced reasons of procedure rather than substance to explain their reluctance. If the Security Council is serious in its resolve to advance its working methods, it has now been given a detailed menu for doing so.

Of particular relevance in the work of the Council is the area of accountability. Two decades after the establishment of the first ad hoc tribunal, it often seems that the Council finds itself in uncharted territory in this respect. At the same time, the accountability needs and the relevant pressure on the Council are increasing, as is illustrated in connection with the widespread and systematic crimes committed against the civilian population in Syria. There is a clear need for the Council to engage with the rest of the membership in an in-depth and comprehensive discussion of the role that it can play in this respect. The open debate that Guatemala organized on this topic in October (S/PV.6849) was a significant step, while just a first one. We organized a workshop with the International Peace Institute on the same topic earlier this month, and hope that other States, members of the Council or otherwise, will show an active interest in this important subject.

A substantial part of this discussion, while by far not all of it, will naturally revolve around the International Criminal Court, given the competencies assigned to the Council under the Rome Statute. As a first small step in this direction, we believe that a subsidiary body — preferably an existing one — should be designated as the place where relevant topics, including notifications from the Court on non-cooperation, can be discussed. To this end, my delegation, together with the delegations of Costa Rica and Jordan, has submitted a letter (S/2012/860) to you, Sir, asking that the Council take such a step as a concrete follow-up to the open debate held in October.

The use of the veto is a central aspect of the way in which the Council carries out its work or, more frequently, fails to do so. The past year has given ample evidence to this effect. The veto as such is part and parcel of the Charter of the United Nations, which we all have ratified. But it is essential that it not be used contrary to the very purposes and principles of the Organization and that a minimum of accountability be provided in this respect. We believe that a code of conduct regarding the use of the veto would be useful, with a clear emphasis on its use in situations involving genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We encourage the Council, in particular its permanent members, to commence this discussion.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand thanks India and you, Sir, personally for convening this debate and for the concept note (S/2012/853, annex), and we compliment the Ambassador for Portugal on his presentation.

This is an important debate. It is vital that the Council be both efficient and effective in discharging its responsibilities on our behalf, and to do that the Council must be alert to opportunities to improve its processes. We accept that most improvements to Council working methods will be incremental and that individual cases will often steer the nature and pace of reform. But it is also true that this Council has often been slow to adapt to the changing nature of the issues it must address.

For example, much of the Council's work is focused on Africa, and yet the quality of the Council's interaction with the African Union's Peace and Security Council is still much less than it could be and is certainly still much less than it should be. There is a general need for effective interaction with regional organizations, but, given the number of African issues on the Council's agenda, that need is particularly acute with respect to the Peace and Security Council. We echo the comments in that regard by South Africa and others because, despite the excellent work of South Africa and other African Council members, there is still much work to be done. Resolution 2033 (2012) was only achieved after several years of effort. It was an important step, but its implementation is now critical and will require innovative Council working methods.

Many United Nations Members are concerned that the Security Council fails to achieve optimum outcomes because it does not give due weight to the mechanisms available under Chapter VI of the Charter — a point also made by you, Mr. President. Mediation, conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes are not only efficient in that they are much less expensive than costly peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations, but many of us also believe that they deliver more sustainable outcomes over the longer term. But again, the Council's working methods are not well adapted to Chapter VI.

We admire South Africa's efforts and determination to transform the output of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa from the theoretical to the practical, but despite those efforts, the Working Group's potential is still not being realized. Indeed, we would like to see a full-scale review of the structure and functioning of all the Council's standing and ad hoc committees, working groups and commissions. We believe that much of their work could be greatly improved.

Likewise, we welcome the United Kingdom's initiative to use horizon-scanning to improve Council capacity for Chapter VI action. But that has largely fallen by the wayside — so much so that in 2012 this Council is much less systematically briefed by the Secretariat on developing situations than it was in the past. We consider that horizon-scanning briefings should be a regular feature of the Council's programme of work.

Past Council members have raised the important issue of the interdependence between security and development and the overlap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We commend Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, Turkey and others for keeping those discussions before the Council. But despite their best efforts, the Council's outcome documents rarely get past the point of problem definition.

Everyone seems to agree that there is a problem, but the working methods reforms required for the Security Council to work in partnership with others and to implement solutions are still not being addressed. Likewise, despite concerns expressed over many years, there is still the problem of participation in the Council's work by those with a real interest in the issues under discussion. The Arria Formula and interactive dialogues are useful formats to extend participation, so their use should be commonplace and not an exception. As another way of extending participation, we would urge the Council to consider, adapting as appropriate, the Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) example of country-specific configurations. The PBC precedent as a whole probably is not applicable to Security Council processes, but there is still much that could be learned from that model.

The legal responsibility for adapting the Council's working methods rests, of course, with the Council itself, but the wider United Nations membership has a strong political, moral and often financial interest in how well the Council functions. As the concept note says, these matters concern the United Nations Member States as a whole. And so, with such engagement in mind, we propose that in 2013 there should be an open Security Council debate focused on options for improving the Council's working methodologies under Chapter VI. That debate could be preceded by an informal interactive dialogue with non-Council members, which would better inform the open debate and could also result in an outcome document that the Council itself could adopt. After that debate, the Council and interested non-members might consider establishing a dialogue group to address this and other procedural issues on an ongoing basis.

We offer this as a constructive, practical proposal for engaging the wider United Nations membership in this important issue, while at the same time leaving the ultimate decisions to the Council itself. We make that proposal — indeed, all the suggestions we have offered — in recognition and acknowledgement of the open and constructive spirit in which you, Mr. President, have convened this debate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank India for convening this important open debate. I also wish to convey my country's appreciation to Portugal for its work to improve the transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency of the Security Council's work during its chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Historically, Argentina has promoted a more transparent and democratic Security Council whenever it has had the opportunity, including in the course of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform in the General Assembly. It is worth recalling that it was Argentina who, in February 2000, during its presidency of the Security Council, urged the adoption of a presidential note in which newly elected members were invited to participate as observers in informal consultations during the month preceding their term of membership as elected members of that organ (S/2000/155). Also, during its most recent term in the Council, in 2005 and 2006, my country promoted and supported a number of initiatives aimed at achieving greater transparency and access to the Council for the wider United Nations membership.

It would be unfair not to acknowledge the positive developments that have taken place in the last few years, including the holding of these debates, which offer an opportunity for non-Council members to put forward proposals aimed at further improving the Council's working methods and democratizing its decision-making process. The interaction of the Security Council with troop – and police-contributing countries, with regional organizations and with the relevant United Nations bodies, as well as the increase in Arria Formula meetings, inter alia, are developments also worth mentioning. However, we believe that, although necessary, these achievements are not sufficient, as became clear last May when the proposals of the group of five small nations were discussed. Those proposals are in line with Argentina's position on the matter. At that time, Argentina did not deem it advisable to force a decision through a resolution adopted by a vote in the General Assembly. However, there is no reason why the Security Council should not benefit from the contributions that an in-depth debate in the General Assembly can generate. We believe that such a debate on methodological improvements is both appropriate and timely, and in no way impedes progress towards a deeper, comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The new measures being considered by the Council with regard to the process of appointing the chairs of subsidiary bodies and the exercise and role of penholders seem to be going in a good direction, despite the fact that, once again, the discussion of the topic has been limited to Council members, without a participatory process involving the wider membership.

The goal of achieving a more democratic, effective and transparent Security Council requires that the means for its transformation involve an open and inclusive debate with the participation of the full membership. Paragraph 1, Article 2, Chapter I of the Charter, which governs and inspires us, reads: "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members". It is therefore clear that the most legitimate, representative and efficient way to make sure that the process moves forward is to work in consultation with the entirety of the wider membership, while respecting and taking into consideration its expectations.

Lastly, Argentina believes that updating the working methods of the Security Council in response to the demands of the international community for a more democratic and transparent Security Council continues to be an important goal, which Argentina endorses. In that regard, Argentina reaffirms its promise to contribute its best efforts to the process in 2013-2014 as a non-permanent member of the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): We thank the Indian presidency of the Council for organizing today's open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. We welcome that this debate has become an annual tradition. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the remarkable work done by Portugal as Chair of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions throughout 2012.

During the past few months, progress has been made on the internal organization of the Council's work, notably with the adoption of the presidential note of 5 June (S/2012/402), which recommends better use of conference resources and greater interactivity during consultations. With the aid of the Secretariat, efforts have also been made to spread the mandate renewals more evenly throughout the year.

Nevertheless, there is certainly still room for improving the effectiveness of the Council's work, for increasing its transparency and for strengthening the interaction between the Council and non-members. The concept note prepared by India and Portugal (S/2012/853, annex) contains helpful suggestions in that regard. Without intending an exhaustive list, I would like to mention a few concrete proposals that would merit further consideration in Luxembourg's view.

First, we should continue to improve the transparency and interactivity of the Council's debates by tailoring the format of meetings to our needs. Arria Formula meetings facilitate exchanges with civil society and non-governmental organizations, the insights and field experience of which can have particular relevance for the Concil's deliberations. Informal interactive dialogues allow for increased interaction, inter alia with non-members involved in a situation on the Council's agenda.

The dialogue on peacebuilding that took place on 12 July (see S/PV.6805), in which Luxembourg was invited to take part in its capacity as Chair of the Guinea configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), was a good example of such interaction. Such dialogues are useful insofar as adequate follow-up is ensured. In our opinion, it is to be hoped that non-members that are

in a position to bring added value, such as the Chairs of the PBC country-specific configurations, will be invited to join the Council's consultations.

Furthermore, developments in Africa and in the Middle East strengthen our conviction that we should continue to ensure the best possible interaction between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations concerned, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States. While respecting competencies and mandates, we believe that the Security Council should strive to make good use of the particular expertise that those organizations, as well as other stakeholders such as the European Union, have to offer.

Finally, we encourage the initiatives taken in recent years to better prepare the Security Council to anticipate threats to international peace and security. A case in point is the practice initiated under the presidency of the United Kingdom in November 2010 to invite the Department of Political Affairs to present to the Council issues that, because of their destabilizing potential, deserve its attention. In our view, that is a good example of applying Article 99 of the Charter, under which the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that may in his opinion threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. If that early-warning function is used wisely, the Security Council will be better equipped to fulfil the responsibilities conferred upon it by the Charter.

In the context of improving the working methods of the Security Council, the case has often been made that adequate follow-up should be given to the Council's thematic debates. To give but one example, the very rich open debate that took place on 17 October under the presidency of Guatemala on the topic of the interaction between the Security Council and the International Criminal Court (see S/PV.6849) clearly deserves such follow-up.

The steps taken after the open debate of 30 November 2011 on working methods (see S/PV.6672) are, in our view, a good example to follow in that regard. We hope that today's debate will encourage further progress and that the useful suggestions made by the many Member States participating in this debate will not go unheeded. As an elected member of the Security Council for the term 2013-2014, I can guarantee that Luxembourg will spare no effort to contribute to the process.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation for the work of Mr. José Filipe Moraes Cabral, Permanent Representative of Portugal, for his contribution in his capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Under Article 25 of the Charter, we, the Member States, accept decisions of the Security Council as binding on all Member States. That does not mean, however, that the legitimacy of decisions of the Security Council can be taken for granted. Let us recall that our leaders at the World Summit in 2005 agreed and adopted by consensus General Assembly resolution 60/1, in which the Assembly recommended that the Security Council enhance its accountability to the membership and increase the transparency of its work. In a nutshell, we should remind ourselves of the fundamental structure provided for in the Charter, in which improving the Council's working methods is indispensable for enhancing the legitimacy of the decisions of the Security Council.

From that perspective, Japan attaches great importance to the efforts to improve the Council's working methods. In its capacity as then Chair of the Working Group, Japan took the initiative of compiling the presidential note on the subject in 2006 (S/2006/507), updating it in 2010 (S/2010/507). As duly reflected in the revised note of 2010, significant progress has been made so far. For example, the Council engages more frequently than before in interactions with non-Council members through various formats. Informal interactive dialogues have been utilized this year in relation to some regional and thematic issues. Furthermore, the presidency briefs non-Council members on the Council's programme of work at the beginning of each month, and that information is made readily available on the Council website. We would like to commend Portugal's chairmanship of the Informal Working Group this year, under which the Group realized a notable achievement by issuing a presidential note in June (S/2012/402) concerning conference resources and interactivity. Since then, we understand that the Working Group has been actively addressing other issues, such as penholders in the drafting of resolutions and chairpersons of subsidiary organs, inter alia. We look forward to seeing the results of such discussions adopted by the Council in due course so that the wider

membership can better understand how the Council intends to conduct its work in the future.

While acknowledging the progress made to date, it is essential to further enhance the transparency of the Council by steadily implementing note 507. The efforts and cooperation of the Council, especially of the permanent members, are indispensable for achieving real progress in that area. Of course, periodic review of the progress is necessary.

We all recall that last May, the group of five small nations presented a draft resolution that had a direct bearing on the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council, but in the end the group withdrew the draft resolution. The Permanent Representative of Switzerland, Mr. Paul Seger, stated,

> "We have listened carefully to the statements of the permanent members of the Security Council that they are ready to consider our recommendations seriously, and we hold them to their promise, with the Assembly as witness... If we see some real substantive progress starting within the next months, our efforts will not have been in vain" (*A/66/PV.108, p. 6*).

Now we would like to know whether any tangible progress has been made since then.

The participation of many non-Council members in today's meeting further testifies to the fact that the working methods remain a critical issue. Recognizing the importance of that issue, we look forward to seeing the Council — including its newly elected members for the next term — achieve greater progress in that regard. I would like to reiterate Japan's determination to continue to actively contribute to promoting improvement in the working methods.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Chua (Singapore): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate. I will deliver a shortened version of my statement; a longer version is being circulated in the Chamber.

As is well known, Singapore strongly supports Security Council reform, particularly in the area of working methods. The working methods of the Security Council are of fundamental interest to all Member States. The Council has the power to authorize military action and international sanctions — decisions that are binding on all Member States. Through the veto, the five permanent members (P-5) can also prevent the Council from taking such measures. Yet most of us have no way of influencing the decisions of the Council. We are called and dismissed entirely at the Council's discretion, even on issues that affect our countries directly. We are expected to dutifully contribute to the Council's mandated operations and comply with its decisions or lack thereof, even if they are not in the interests of the international community.

Public statements made by the P-5 would suggest that they share our position on the need for improvements to the Council's working methods. At last year's open debate (S/PV.6672), almost all of the permanent members spoke in support of improving the Council's working methods. This morning, we have also heard various permanent members express similar support for and commitment to reforming the Council's working methods.

My delegation welcomes those commitments. We are therefore puzzled that whenever serious opportunities for improvements in working methods are presented, they are more often than not blocked by none other than the P-5. Naturally, the P-5 will point to an increased number of open meetings and outreach to the general membership as evidence of their commitment to improving working methods. But meetings are no substitute for genuine improvements.

Few issues galvanize the P-5 into a unity of purpose and action as quickly as opposition to working methods reform. Member States are no doubt familiar with what happened in May when the group of five small countries presented draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2, designed to improve the working methods of the Council. The draft resolution's aims were frankly rather modest, and the impact of the recommendations would have been limited even if they had been adopted, but the P-5 resorted to strong-arm tactics in order to ensure that A/66/L.42/Rev.2 never saw the light of day.

One particular incident highlights the P-5's determined resistance to the reform of the Council's working methods, despite whatever they may proclaim to the contrary. In response to a query from the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) gave an interpretation that "it would be appropriate if the General Assembly were to adopt the draft resolution with the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the General Assembly membership". Member States learnt of that legal opinion, not from OLA or even from the President

of the General Assembly, who had first raised the query. Instead, it was a permanent member who faxed and emailed OLA's legal opinion to all Member States the morning of the formal consideration of the draft resolution, with the admonition to all Member States to support a no-action motion on A/66/L.42/Rev.2. How did that P-5 mission procure the OLA's legal opinion, even before the President of the General Assembly himself had circulated it to the United Nations membership? What does that say about the P-5's real position on working methods of the Security Council? Do deeds match words?

Let me cite another example. Draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 had asked the P-5 to consider refraining from vetoing action aimed at preventing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. That aspect was considered particularly controversial by the P-5, which were affronted by the suggestion that limits be placed on the use of their veto power. That position was shared by all the P-5, even those who fervently support the principle of responsibility to protect. Those permanent members that repeatedly express outrage at what is happening within the Council on issues like Syria are the same ones that blocked A/66/L.42/Rev.2. Trumpeting moral outrage over the Council's non-action is particularly hypocritical because whatever divisions there may be among the P-5, they are united in having no limits placed on their use or abuse of the veto.

My statement today is not intended to be a diatribe on the Security Council or the P-5. I hope that I will not be misunderstood. Indeed, my delegation believes that the Security Council, and permanent members in particular, shoulder a long-standing responsibility on behalf of the international community. By and large, the Security Council does good work on behalf of Member States in preserving international peace and security. However, the P-5's continued resistance to constructive proposals on working methods does not serve the interests of the United Nations membership or the legitimacy and transparency of the Security Council, or even ultimately the interests of the P-5 themselves. I hope that it will not take a crisis of seismic proportions to precipitate a fundamental change.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): Egypt associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, I would like to commend the Indian presidency of the Security Council for convening today's open debate on the working methods of the Council. I would like also to seize this opportunity to congratulate Argentina, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Luxembourg and Rwanda on their election as non-permanent members of the Security Council for the years 2013 and 2014. I would also like to thank the outgoing members Colombia, Germany, India, Portugal, and South Africa for their efforts during the years 2011 and 2012.

Reforming the Security Council's working methods is an important component of the overall reform and expansion of the Council in accordance with General Assembly decision 62/557. It is indeed a positive step to have annual open debates in the Security Council on improving the Council's working methods in order to systematically analyse the progress achieved in that regard. Convening such open debates, however, is not an end in itself. The outcome of such debates should reflect the views expressed by non-Council members if the Council is to achieve efficiency, transparency and inclusiveness.

A major concrete step towards improving the working methods of the Council would be to reach an agreement on the Council's provisional rules of procedure, which have been in force for more than 60 years now. The effective functioning of the Council has a direct impact on the general membership of the United Nations.

Egypt appreciates the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the chairmanship of the Permanent Representative of Portugal. We note the adoption of presidential note 402 (S/2012/402), which contains measures on the use of conference services and proposals to enhance interaction during the consultations of the whole. However, greater effort should be made to promote full implementation of presidential note S/2010/507, which was prepared two years ago. For its part, the Secretariat should continue to update the repertoire of the practice of the Security Council as a valuable source of information about the Council's evolving practices on procedural and substantive matters alike. We appreciate the Secretariat's efforts to develop the Security Council web page, making it more informative and user-friendly.

The Security Council's annual report should be more comprehensive and analytical. The General Assembly

should be well informed not only about the decisions adopted by the Council but also about the reasons for those decisions and the backdrops against which they are taken, as well as their impact on situations on the ground. We also expect the Council, in its future annual reports, to add more detailed information on measures taken to improve its working methods in order for progress achieved in that area to be properly assessed. The Council should submit special reports for the General Assembly's consideration, pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 15 and paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the United Nations Charter. The General Assembly may also take the initiative and request such reports if it deems them necessary.

Public meetings of the Council, including briefings and debates, should take into account the contributions of non-Council members, particularly those that may be directly affected by the Council's decisions. Private meetings, informal consultations and closed meetings should be kept to a minimum. They should have written records, which should be available to non-Council members. Such records could be made publicly available — at least after a certain period of time, in the way that some Member States release restricted documents after a certain number of years have passed — for the sake of transparency and also as a historical record for the benefit of future generations.

Issues to be covered at any briefing by the Secretariat should be determined in coordination with the concerned State or party and after approval by all Council members. Statements after such briefings should not be restricted to Council members, and the parties concerned should be given the opportunity to express their views on such briefings. Any decision of the Security Council to initiate formal or informal discussions on the situation in any Member State or on any other issues that do not constitute a threat to international peace and security is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter. We urge the Council to observe its mandate strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.

Members of the Security Council should consult informally with interested Member States, including countries directly involved or affcted, when drafting resolutions or other outcomes of the Council. The penholdership of draft resolutions should not be limited to permanent members.

Egypt welcomes the Council's continuing briefings and consultations designed to help troop-contributing countries plan and fulfil peacekeeping operations mandates. The Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations should engage troop-contributing countires more frequently in its deliberations. The Chairs of the country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the countries concerned, should be invited to participate in the Council's meetings when situations in those countries are considered.

When the brutal Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip began, the Security Council managed to convene only one private meeting and closed consultations to address the situation and was unable to decide on convening a public meeting. A body that is entrusted with the responsibility for upholding international peace and security should be able to do more than that. This is a fresh reminder of the urgent need for reform of the Council's working methods.

In conclusion, what is needed is not additional proposals but the political will to implement the multitude of ideas that have been proposed for improving the working methods of the Council. The General Assembly and the Security Council should forge a mutually reinforcing and complementary relationship while respecting each other's mandate. This is essential to achieving the objectives of the United Nations and to enabling it, and us, to remain relevant in addressing the existing and emerging challenges facing the international community.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): At a time when the world is witnessing the deterioration of several crises in various parts of the globe, there is only one organ mandated under the Charter of the United Nations to play a key role in preventing, mediating or ending conflicts. That is the Security Council. It sometimes lives up to its mandate and to the expectations of the peoples concerned. It has thus been able to make some decisions in the space of only a few hours, including, for example, resolution 2076 (2012), seeking a way to resolve the crisis in Goma. I hope that the Council will pursue its efforts to stop the violence and to find a framework for a political solution to the crisis.

That said, the Council has proved incapable of reacting quickly to the crisis in Syria and the recent events in Gaza. Similarly, it has shown no haste even in

dealing with more promising developments, such as the ceasefire between Israel and Gaza. In Syria, civilians are dying or being deprived of humanitarian assistance while the Council debates procedural questions.

Six months ago, the group of five small nations introduced draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 in the General Assembly on the Security Council's working methods. While the draft resolution was subsequently withdrawn, the group nonetheless received very positive reactions from the wider membership before, during and after its introduction. Switzerland has repeatedly stressed that change in the Security Council must first come from within. We have always seen improvement of its working methods as an ongoing process during which we should maintain a sustained and constructive dialogue with the Council, which derives its legitimacy from the membership as a whole.

That is why I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to convene this open debate and for drafting a concept note that gives food for thought (S/2012/853, annex). The note is a reminder and an excellent review of the practical measures that can be taken to improve the Council's transparency, efficiency and interaction with the membership of the United Nations as a whole. I take this opportunity to thank another member of the Security Council, whose term ends in a month. Portugal has done valuable work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and I would particularly like to thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral for his personal commitment to that effort. We hope that a new Council member will take up the torch with the same enthusiasm and persistence.

That having been said, we became convinced during the discussions in May with the permanent members of the Security Council of draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 that the Working Group could make substantial progress. Like the representative of Liechstenstein, we believe that the annex to the draft resolution forms a basis for future discussion. While a presidential note on conference resources was indeed adopted (S/2012/402), the second part of that note, which proposed establishing systematic horizon-scanning meetings of the Council with the Department of Political Affairs as a tool of preventive diplomacy, was unfortunately not retained. A second note, on a more transparent way of allocating the chairmanships of subsidiary bodies and penholders within the Council, has still not been adopted. Along with other delegations, we therefore encourage the Council to return to the tradition of regular horizon-scanning and make another effort to finalize the note on subsidiary bodies and the issue of penholders. We also hope that the allocation of committee chairmanships will be more transparent, enabling all members elected in 2013 to participate.

Another aspect that we would like to highlight here is the potential for improving relations between the Security Council and the International Criminal Court. As many countries mentioned during the open debate on the rule of law held on 17 October (S/PV.6849), the Council should consider taking concrete steps to strengthen the synergies between the two bodies. As the representative of Liechtenstein remarked, it could, for example, set up a subsidiary mechanism tasked with addressing questions arising from their relationship.

Finally, the question of the veto must be addressed. Switzerland has repeatedly suggested that member States using the veto be obliged to explain their reasons for doing so and to refrain from blocking action in cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Such a practice would be perfectly in line with the spirit of the veto, which was conceived as a mechanism to protect vital national interests. We commend France for its offer to take a step in that direction and encourage other permanent members to follow that example.

Those are just some ideas on ways to continue improving the working methods of the Security Council, which we submit for the Council's consideration. Members have certainly heard ideas from many other delegations, and we hope that the members of the Council will not simply listen patiently to our appeals but will take them up in a constructive spirit. We are aware that there are some encouraging signs, and we applaud the efforts the Council has made to enhance transparency and inclusiveness within the Council itself and in its relations with the wider membership.

Switzerland attaches great importance to the question of Security Council working methods and will continue to engage in joint efforts aimed at improving them. While considerable progress has been achieved in a number of areas, much remains to be done in others. We therefore intend to continue our engagement in the former group of five small nations under a new configuration, and we are currently holding promising consultations to that end. We look forward to continuing the dialogue on working methods in a constructive spirit with all members of the Council.

It is said that imitation is the most sincere sort of complement. We therefore hope that another presidency will imitate yours, Sir, and hold a follow-up debate next year.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the pleasure to speak today on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). At the outset, I would like to convey the Movement's appreciation to the Indian presidency of the Security Council for having convened this important open debate to discuss the progress achieved in the implementation of the measures set out in the note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507) and the concept paper (S/2012/853, annex). This open debate will help us direct the discussions towards enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the work of the Security Council and to meet the expectations of the general membership of the United Nations. I would also like to thank Ambassador Moraes Cabral, Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, for his briefing today.

This debate is the fifth on the working methods of the Council. The increased frequency in recent years of holding such debates is indicative of the fact that the Member States attach great importance to this matter. The same interest has been shown by the Non-Aligned Movement. The Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at its sixteenth Summit, held this year in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, reiterated their long-standing position on the issue in the relevant paragraphs adopted at the Summit.

At that NAM Summit meeting in Tehran, taking into account the inter-linkage between Security Council reform and improving its working methods, NAM Heads of State and Government underscored the need for United Nations Member States to fully respect the functions and powers of each principal organ of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, and to maintain the balance among these organs within their respective Charter-based functions and powers. They stressed that the Security Council must fully observe all Charter provisions and all General Assembly resolutions, which clarify its relationship with the latter organ and other principal organs. In this context, they affirmed that Article 24 of the Charter does not necessarily provide the Security Council with the competence to address issues that fall within the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, including in the areas of norm-setting, legislation, administrative and budgetary matters, and establishing definitions, bearing in mind that the Assembly is primarily tasked with the progressive development of international law and its codification.

In this regard, the meeting expressed its grave concern over the increasing and continuing encroachment by the Council on issues that clearly fall within the functions and powers of other principal organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies. It further stressed that close cooperation and coordination among all principal organs are indispensable in order to enable the United Nations to remain relevant and capable of meeting the existing, new and emerging threats and challenges.

The NAM Summit also recommended, inter alia, the following. It urged all States to uphold the primacy of and full respect for the provisions of the United Nations Charter pertaining to the functions and powers of the Assembly and called on the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council to conduct regular discussions and coordination among themselves regarding the agenda and programme of work of the respective principal organs that they represent in order to establish increased coherence and complementarity among those organs in a mutually reinforcing manner, respectful of each other's mandates, and with a view to generating a mutual understanding among them, in whom the members of the respective organs that they represent have vested in good faith their trust and confidence.

It also welcomed as a step forward the informal meetings between the Presidents of the Council and Member States regarding the preparation of the annual report of the Security Council, including those convened by Viet Nam in 2008, Uganda in 2009, Nigeria in 2010, Germany in 2011 and Colombia in 2012, and called for more regular interaction between presidencies of the Security Council and the wider membership of the United Nations, which could help enhance the quality of such reports.

It called on the Security Council to submit a more explanatory, comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly, assessing the work of the Council, including in such cases where the Council has failed to act, and the views expressed by its members during the consideration of the agenda items under its consideration. It further called on the Security Council

to elaborate on the circumstances under which it adopts different outcomes, whether resolutions, presidential statements, press statements or remarks to the press.

It called on the Security Council, pursuant to Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, to submit special reports for the consideration of the General Assembly. It further called on the Security Council to ensure that its monthly assessments are comprehensive, analytical and issued in a timely fashion. The General Assembly may consider proposing parameters for the elaboration of such assessments.

It called on the Security Council to fully take into account the recommendations of the General Assembly on matters relating to international peace and security, consistent with Article 11 of the Charter.

The Security Council should avoid resorting to Chapter VII of the Charter as a tool for addressing issues that do not necessarily pose a threat to international peace and security. It should fully utilize the provisions of other relevant chapters, including Chapters VI and VIII, before invoking Chapter VII, which should be a measure of last resort.

The Non-Aligned Movement notes the presidential note of 5 June (S/2012/402), which expresses the commitment of members to several efficiency-enhancing measures with regard to the working methods, including on the management of the Council's programme of work, its meetings and their periodicity, conference resources and interactivity, in maintaining closer contact between the Security Council and United Nations missions in the field.

The Security Council has taken some positive steps pursuant to note 507. The Movement notes the increase in the number of public meetings, and expects that such an increase will be accompanied by a qualitative improvement through the provision of real opportunities and more meaningful exchanges of view in order to take into account the contributions of non-Council members, particularly those whose interests are or may be directly affected by possible decisions of the Council. Furthermore, the concerned non-Council member should be given the opportunity to express its views and position on such briefings.

The general observations and positions formulated by numerous non-members of the Security Council during its debates, including open debates, should be properly taken into account in any possible outcome of those debates and should be reflected in the Council's annual report. NAM appreciates the more frequent convening of Arria Formula meetings as a practical way to ensure more interaction with non-Council members and regional and subregional organizations. It also appreciates the holding of informal wrap-up sessions at the end of each presidency to evaluate what has been achieved.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the continued briefings and consultations of the Council with troop-contributing countries (TCCs) as part of the effort to plan and to execute peacekeeping operations more effectively and with clearer mandates. The Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations should involve TCCs more frequently and more intensively in its deliberations through sustained, regular and timely interaction.

To increase the transparency of its work, to achieve a balanced approach in interaction with non-members and to improve the efficiency of its working methods, the Council should seriously address the shortcomings and take into consideration the relevant provisions of the Charter and the resolutions that clarify its relationship with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations.

Finally, the Movement believes that more steps are needed, along with the necessary political will on the part of Member States, particularly the permanent members of the Council, to improve the working methods of the Council through both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Transparency, accountability and consistency are key elements that the Security Council should observe in all its activities, approaches and procedures. Every effort should be made to render the Council more democratic, representative and accountable. In that way, the Security Council can deal more efficiently and effectively with its increasing workload and with the multiplicity and complexity of the issues on its agenda in maintaining international peace and security. The Non-Aligned Movement stands ready to contribute to the achievement of those goals.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Ms. Anderson (Ireland): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council and for the excellent concept paper (S/2012/853, annex) that you circulated to help guide our discussion today.

At the outset, let me state our clear view that the question of improving the working methods of the Security Council is a matter of legitimate interest to all Member States. We fully respect the prerogatives of the Security Council regarding its own working methods, but we must never forget that the Council acts on behalf of the world community on matters of peace and security and that Member States are individually and collectively bound by its decisions. Accordingly, we have a direct interest in understanding its decision-making processes and in working to ensure that those processes operate with the maximum transparency and accountability for all of us, who are pledged to be bound by its decisions.

Ireland has been a consistent supporter of initiatives aimed at improving the working methods of the Security Council, notably those proposed in recent years by the group of five small nations. We acknowledge that members of the Council have shown a willingness to respond to aspects of those initiatives, as well as the fact that steps have been taken internally by the Council in the form of agreement on presidential notes. Those developments address some of the concerns raised by non-Council members. Such steps are welcome in themselves, but we believe that much more needs to be done to improve the transparency and accountability of the workings of the Council.

A wealth of ideas and suggestions for improving the Council's working methods has been proposed in recent years. A number of them are set down in the concept paper. For the sake of brevity, today I will confine myself to mentioning just a few elements that fall under the overall headings of transparency, accountability and openness.

First, there is the overriding requirement to take measures that will add structure to the Council's working methods and that make them more transparent to the wider membership. That would ideally involve the adoption of formal rules of procedure and the inclusion of an analytical element on the implementation of its working methods in the Council's annual report.

Secondly, there is the need to improve accountability in relation to the missions and operations mandated by the Council, which are a key output of its work. That could, for example, include the provision of more detailed and timely information to Member States on all aspects of operations and missions, as well as more regular participation by troop – and police-contributing countries in informal discussions on the missions and operations in which they participate, and on ways to improve the drafting and refining of relevant mandates.

Thirdly, we wish to see greater openness towards the wider membership with regard to the Council's day-to-day work. There are many potential areas for improvement in that connection. One example would be the provision of regular briefings to the membership on the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies. Another would involve seeking the views of the membership on the Council's annual report at the time of its drafting.

We believe that those and many other ideas are worthy of consideration by the members of the Council. Today's annual debate provides a welcome one-off opportunity to discuss such issues, but what is really needed is a rolling dialogue on the matters between the Council and the wider United Nations membership in the period ahead. For our part, we are ready to participate in such a dialogue.

Finally, I know that some members have expressed reticence about moving ahead on working methods, noting that that issue is but one element of the comprehensive agenda for reform of the Security Council. I understand such concerns, given the sharp divisions within the membership on certain aspects of the overall reform agenda. Like others, we are frustrated by the lack of progress on a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, on which discussions remain stalled after almost 20 years.

However, the issue of working methods is unique among the elements of the prospective comprehensive reform in that it applies to the currently configured Council equally as it would to a reformed Council. The role of the Security Council in today's world is too important to leave on indefinite hold our wish to see a more effective and transparent Council, accountable to the community of nations on whose behalf it carries out its vital work.

I believe that the great majority of States Members of the United Nations want to see improvements in the working methods of the Security Council that will ensure that the work of the Council is more effective and more transparent to the wider membership. It is incumbent upon all of us to put aside our individual political agendas and work for sensible and practical changes that are readily attainable. Even modest success in this important area will help to build the wider confidence that will enable us over time to meet the more complex challenges of comprehensive reform.

The President: There are still a number of speakers on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6870 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6870th meeting
Monday, 26 November 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

President.	Mr. Vinay Kumar	(India)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Sharifov
	China	Ms. Liu Bing
	Colombia	Mr. Quintana
	France	Mrs. Le Fraper du Hellen
	Germany	Mr. Eick
	Guatemala	Mr. Briz Gutiérrez
	Morocco	Mr. Taib
	Pakistan	Mr. Ahmad
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Filimonov
	South Africa	Ms. Sabelo
	Togo	Mr. Yagninim
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mrs. Weekley
	United States of America	Mr. Cenzer

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Working methods

Letter dated 19 November 2012 from the Permanent Representatives of India and Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/853)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-60646 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): Mr. President, I wish to commend you for the efforts made to engage the wider membership on this important issue of improving the working methods of the Security Council, at a time when the Council is perceived to be in a state of paralysis in terms of finding a lasting solution to the pressing events that are currently taking place in the Middle East, in particular in the occupied territories of Palestine and Syria. I wish also to align my statement with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Malaysia welcomes the efforts made by the Security Council in enhancing the efficiency of its work, as well as interaction and dialogue with non-Council members. In that connection, the note by the President of the Council (S/2010/507) and Japan's subsequent efforts in 2010 as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions in producing the *Handbook on the Working Methods of the Security Council*, known as the "green book", are landmark efforts. These are steps that are pushing forward the reform process of the Security Council, to which Malaysia stands ready to contribute.

Article 30 of the United Nations Charter stipulates that the Security Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure. On that basis, the Council adopted its provisional rules of procedure (S/96) in 1946. The provisional rules of procedure were later modified on several occasions, with the last revision being made in 1982, through S/96/Rev.7. It has therefore been 30 years since those provisional rules were last amended.

The provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council are in many ways a relic of the Second World War and the days of the Cold War. While other major organs of the United Nations have made their fair share of changes to their rules of procedure, regrettably the Security Council has refused to evolve with the times. More positive changes could be made to the Council's working methods if its members interpreted Article 30 of the Charter with a view to making the Council more democratic and to further improving the efficiency of its work. Members have to rise above their entrenched national interests and move forward so as to make the Council an organ that serves the wider membership as a whole.

How can we further improve the working methods of the Security Council so as to make it much more effective in the current situation? While presidential note 507 was indeed a positive move, the Council should also consider favourably General Assembly draft resolution A/66/L.42. Many, if not all, of the elements of change proposed in that draft resolution could be taken on board by the Council with a view to helping to move the reform process ahead and without the need to amend the United Nations Charter. It is time for the Council to move beyond the weak arguments put forward by States with the sole intention of maintaining the status quo on working methods and indirectly ensuring that their national interests continue to be protected.

The world today is extremely disappointed by the fact that the Council has not been able to do what it was mandated to do: maintain international peace and security. Let us look at what is happening in the Middle East today. Can the Council claim that it has been at the forefront in dealing with the tragedies in Palestine and in Syria? Has the Council moved beyond national interests in stopping the ongoing violence that has led to the deaths of 30,000 people in Syria and a rising number of casualties in Palestine? Were non-members of the Council, as responsible members of the international community, allowed to present their views during the Council's meeting on the attack on Gaza held on 14 November (see S/PV.6863) and during the one held on 21 November (see S/PV.6869)?

Unfortunately, the answer to all those questions is a resounding "no". Why is that so? Clearly, it is because the provisional rules of procedure and thus the working methods of the Council have failed the international community to the extent that there was recourse to the format of a private meeting on 14 November and to restrictions on the speakers' list for the open meeting held on 21 November, so as to deny non-members the opportunity to condemn the illegal occupier and aggressor in Palestine. We have to search our consciences and ask ourselves if that was the right thing to do. To get a clear answer, we have to put ourselves in the shoes of the victims of that aggression, be they children, women or the elderly.

In this debate, it would be remiss of me not to address the issue of the use of the veto. Malaysia has been consistent in its views on the veto. The use of the veto has led us all into a deadlock on how the international community should address the bloodshed in various regions, especially in the Middle East. The irony is that the veto is a double-edged sword. The permanent members of the Council are finding that the veto, time and again, is being used against them by other permanent members. The adage "what goes around, comes around" could not be more true in the context of the current deadlock faced by the Council on issues relating to the Middle East. The world is told that country "X" is blocking action to resolve the crisis in a certain country through the use of the veto, but the complainant then does the same when action is taken in another country in the region.

Let me reiterate once again that the use of the veto should be prohibited in situations involving genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. If the reform process can start with an agreement on this issue, then the working methods of the Council will have actually improved tremendously. Until such time, the working methods of the Council are still the ones agreed in 1946. The Council today seems to operate in a time warp, refusing to acknowledge the changes that have taken place since the end of the Second World War.

In conclusion, it is clear and known to all that the national interests of the members of the Council and their close allies are hindering the improvement of the working methods of this important organ. The political courage should be found to move beyond those entrenched interests and to make the Council more democratic and bring it in line with the current situation so as to make it reflective of geopolitical realities. Only then would the Council regain the respect of the international community, and the reform process of the United Nations, including reform in the working methods of the Council, would see some real and meaningful improvements.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Shin Dong Ik (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate to discuss the working methods of the Security Council. My thanks also goes to the Portuguese delegation for their extensive work in chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which has been instrumental in moving that issue forward.

With regard to the implementation of the note by the President contained in document S/2010/507, we believe that the Council has undertaken commendable efforts to enhance the participation of the wider membership in its work over the years. We are particularly pleased to note that the number of open meetings has been steadily increasing, while other forms of interaction, such as the monthly briefings for non-members by the presidency and meetings with police- or troop-contributing countries, have helped to promote a better dialogue with the general membership.

Presidencies have also promoted useful practices aimed at increasing efficiency and expediency, such as holding video conferences in open briefings in order to provide updates from the field. I would also like to recognize the Secretariat's work in reorganizing the Council's webpage and in enhancing the availability of information, including on mandates, reporting cycles and an analytical and statistical overview of the Council's activities over the past years.

While my delegation welcomes the progress made thus far, we believe that more can be done. Let me focus on three key areas outlined in the concept paper (S/2012/853, annex) for today's debate: transparency, interaction with non-members and efficiency.

First, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of enhancing transparency in view of the growing interest of the general membership in the work of the Council. The Republic of Korea hopes that the Council will strengthen its efforts to provide regular public briefings and ensure an updated forecast of its upcoming activities. At the same time, the relevant Council documents should be made available to non-members in a timely manner, so as to keep them informed of the Council's activities. Such actions by the Council would be helpful in assisting interested members to contribute to the work of the Council in meaningful ways.

Secondly, we believe the Council should endeavour to make greater use of formats that allow for enhanced interaction with the general membership and regional stakeholders that may play a crucial role in resolving a specific conflict. Informal interactive discussions and meetings with troop- and police-contributing countries should continue to form an important part of Council activities. That would allow greater interaction with concerned parties and garner meaningful input

from them. The Council can also make better use of Arria Formula meetings, so as to allow civil society and non-governmental organizations to enter into meaningful dialogue with the Council. The Council should also work on expanding its relationships and on enhancing coordination with regional and subregional organizations. Cooperation with regional institutions has become all the more essential for finding appropriate solutions to crises and conflicts and for making optimal use of resources and capacities. The annual consultation mechanism between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council is a good example that could be replicated with other regional organizations.

Thirdly, to deal with the ever-increasing volume and diversity of its workload, it is imperative that the Council undertake greater efforts towards increasing its overall efficiency. My delegation notes that Council members have reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing the Council's work in the president's note contained in document S/2012/402 of 5 June 2012. We welcome the fact that the Council has agreed to continue its efforts with a view towards having more focused discussions by minimizing the delivery of pre-prepared statements and by increasing interactivity within the Council's negotiation process. Moreover, we believe that planning its work better by adjusting mandate renewal periods and aligning the timing of reports on related issues would enable the Council to work more efficiently. Cost-saving measures, including avoiding regularly scheduling formal Council meetings on Fridays or avoiding the translation of documents over the weekend also merit continued consideration.

All in all, my Government would like to stress that improving the working methods of the Security Council is indeed an important component in bolstering the effectiveness and overall legitimacy of the Council's work. As a non-permanent member of the Council for the next two years, let me assure the Council that the Republic of Korea will remain deeply committed to improving the Council's working methods and will work strenuously to that end.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Ulibarri (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica would like to thank the Indian presidency for convening the fifth open debate on improving the Security Council's working methods. We would also like to welcome and highlight the work carried out by Portugal as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

One year ago, Costa Rica attended a similar debate (S/PV.6672) aimed at reiterating our commitment to and interest in this matter and at proposing ideas. At that time, the Small Five Group, of which we were a member along with Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland, had already circulated draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 aimed at providing new impetus to the improvements. The draft resolution referred to the existing Security Council, not the Council that could potentially exist at some point if we succeed in achieving its comprehensive reform. Thus, the suggestions contained in the annex to the draft resolution are still valid. They lay out a clear road map, which is always subject to change, for improving the Council's transparency, accountability, distribution of tasks and fulfilment of responsibilities through a stronger use of our Organization's legal and political instruments. In other words, the recommendations aim to further improve what we are already doing, and are based on Articles 10 and 25 of the Charter, which confers responsibility for and authority over the Council's performance on all Member States.

Unfortunately, opposition to the proposal was fierce, particularly on the part of the five permanent members and those countries that believed that the status quo best protected their interests. Furthermore, that opposition did not, unfortunately, rely on substantive arguments, but rather on procedural legalism, which was unjustified but institutionally legitimate and which forced us to withdraw the draft resolution. Nevertheless, the countries that are united in that effort — both within and outside of the group of five small nations — have not wavered in our commitment. Therefore, Costa Rica would like today to insist on the need for the Security Council to commit to the recommendations found in the annex to draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2.

In addition, we would like to emphasize the following proposals. First, an action plan must be adopted for the complete and systematic implementation of presidential note S/2010/507 and its updates. Secondly, transparency in the work of the subsidiary bodies and the selection and independence of the panels of experts must be improved. In addition, the process leading to the election of the chairs of the subsidiary bodies must be more inclusive. Thirdly, the Council's actions in relation to the codification and development of international law must be limited. That is something that, in addition

to being outside of the Council's jurisdiction, has a negative impact on the Council and its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security. Fourthly, cooperation with the International Criminal Court must be strengthened. That cooperation should be guided by impartial and general principles that scrupulously respect the independence of the Court and the respective jurisdictions of both bodies. Fifthly, the Council's relationship with the Human Rights Council must be strengthened, above all because of the role that the independent commissions of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council play in several situations on the Security Council's agenda.

Collective security is everyone's security, by all and for all. But the main responsibilities fall to the Security Council, which is, among other things, the basis for its enormous importance and the need for it to be more efficient, transparent, inclusive and open. Much progress can be made by improving the working methods of the Security Council. All that is missing is the political will to do so. We hope that this debate will succeed in fostering it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): I have the honour to address the Council on behalf of the Netherlands and Belgium.

First of all, I would like to thank India, as President of the Security Council, for convening this debate and for preparing, together with Portugal, what we consider to be an excellent concept note (S/2012/853, annex). We would also like to express our gratitude to Portugal, and in particular its representative Ambassador Moraes Cabral, who organized the previous open debate in 2011 (see S/PV.6672) and has been a driving force behind this important subject as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Belgium and the Netherlands attach great importance to this open debate, which provides the wider United Nations membership with an opportunity to interact with the Security Council members on this matter. We feel a strong sense of urgency to make progress on the improvement of the working methods and on broader Security Council reform, for that matter. As has been said, we think it is high time to enhance the Security Council's accountability to the wider membership and to increase the transparency, legitimacy and effectiveness of its decisions.

In our view, concrete results on this issue can only be achieved through a meaningful dialogue between the Security Council and the General Assembly. That is the path we should follow, and today's debate is an excellent example of how we should proceed. We fully agree with the statement at the very beginning of the concept note that working methods "concern the States Members of the United Nations as a whole" (*S/2012/853, annex, para. 1*).

Moreover, as is also explained in the concept note, real and encouraging improvements have already been made in recent years. The debates on the working methods have already produced results, and it is good to remind ourselves that today the Council is operating under other, better and more transparent working methods than before. The Netherlands and Belgium would like to commend both the permanent and the successive elected members of the Council for their efforts in that regard.

The Netherlands and Belgium want to stress that fact because we do not want the further development of better working methods to become hostage to a lack of progress on the wider debate about Security Council reform. In May, we witnessed the withdrawal of the initiative of the group of five small nations (S-5) on the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council. At that point in time, the permanent members of the Security Council indicated that they were ready to seriously consider the recommendations put forward in the S-5 draft resolution (A/66/L.42/Rev.2). Belgium and the Netherlands hope that they will do so.

We studied the Indian-Portuguese concept note that was sent to us in preparation for this debate, as it contains an interesting overview of recent events and repeatedly stresses the right principles. This debate should lead us to real and concrete measures that simultaneously enhance transparency, efficiency and interactivity within the Council and with the wider membership.

In the concept note, Mr. President, you invite the wider membership to come up with a range of practical suggestions that could make a real difference in the day-to-day business of the Security Council. You, Sir, then sum up a list of concrete and operational ideas and suggestions, some of which were actually been put forward by the Netherlands and Belgium during the

previous debate in November 2011, and I thank you for that.

We welcome those different suggestions in the Indian-Portuguese paper aimed at increasing the involvement of States and other parties non-members of the Security Council in the Council's work, especially the suggestions aimed at enhancing the participation of the chairs of the country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the troop- and police-contributing countries in relevant debates and discussions. We also support the proposal of a more flexible use of available meeting formats, such as Arria Formula meetings or informal interactive dialogues. Furthermore, we support the suggestions on increasing the transparency and inclusivity of the work of the Security Council's subsidiary bodies.

We would also like to repeat our plea to improve country-specific debates by inviting the country at stake in the discussions. Countries that are being debated, but that are not members of the Council, should be given the opportunity to contribute to Council debates at the moment when they really matter and under a formula to be decided on an ad hoc basis. By doing so, the Council would give a fair and decent chance to countries to put their points of view forward. After hearing from such a country, the Council could still discuss the issue at stake in a restricted debate among its members, without the country concerned being present. We also see merit in the proposal to promote more and more interactive open debates. The suggestion to invite non-Council members to speak among Council members is noteworthy.

At the same time, we would like to receive further clarification on some of the other suggestions. The suggestion to enhance the role of the Military Staff Committee is thought-provoking. It would be interesting to explore whether the Military Staff Committee could provide military advice when the Security Council considers the mandate of a military operation.

Belgium and the Netherlands truly appreciate the efforts that have been made so far to improve the working methods of the Security Council. The long list of ideas and suggestions in the concept note deserves our careful attention; some of them could, and should, be swiftly implemented. Let me add that, in addition to those ideas, we would like to underline the importance of the Council giving continued attention to the cases it referred to in the International Criminal Court and to improve its cooperation with the Court, as has just been argued by our colleague Ambassador Ulibarri.

We count on the Security Council members, in particular the permanent members, to make a joint effort together with the wider membership to continue enhancing the transparency, legitimacy, effectiveness and interactivity of the Security Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Ms. Burgstaller (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries, namely, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

Let me first of all thank India for organizing this important and timely open debate. The working methods of the Council affect not only Council members, but the United Nations membership as a whole. Therefore, we much appreciate this opportunity to discuss the issue.

There have been improvements in the Council's working methods over the past years. We note that since the last open debate on this topic (see S/PV.6672), in November 2011, there has been increased attention to this matter.

The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has intensified its work under the excellent stewardship of Portugal. The Council has also held consultations on how to improve the management of the Council's programmes and sessions. Those are all positive developments.

That momentum has not only applied to the inner workings of the Council. The draft resolution (A/66/L.42/Rev.2) introduced to the General Assembly by the so-called group of five small nations (S-5) at the sixty-sixth session fostered a thorough discussion on central aspects of working methods. The S-5 countries deserve much credit for their dedication and long-term commitment. We look forward to their continued contribution to this debate.

The key aspect of any discussion on working methods is transparency. We would therefore like to underscore the need for regular, informative briefings to non-members of the Council. Interactive wrap-up sessions at the end of each presidency enhance information-sharing and openness. We encourage Council members to consider organizing such briefings on a regular basis.

Making the Council's annual report more analytical and forward-looking would also enhance transparency. A closer connection between the monthly reporting and the annual report is encouraged. It is also important to

share regular updates on the scheduling of meetings of the subsidiary bodies in order for the wider membership to stay better informed about the matters they address.

The Nordic countries are eager to contribute to a culture of transparency. In that regard, we fully support the work of Security Council Report, which provides valuable insight and analysis about Council activities to the wider membership. Furthermore, the Finnish workshop, which celebrates 10 years this year, aims at giving new members of the Council an in-depth orientation to the practice, procedures and working methods of the Council. The reports from those workshops are distributed to all United Nations Members as official documents of the Council.

Efficiency in the Council's work is important. Conflicts today are more complex, and the Council's agenda is increasingly stretched. Therefore, we welcome the note issued by the President of the Council in June (S/2012/402). The agreement to change the periodicity of mandate renewals is positive in that regard. We also welcome the ongoing discussion on penholders and the appointment of chairs to the subsidiary bodies.

The quality of open debates could be further improved by ensuring that outcome documents reflect input from all participating countries. Concept papers could direct the focus of the debates to the questions on which the Council would like to consult the larger membership. We also welcome the discussion on the order of speakers. We welcome the Council's increasing use of videoconferences for briefings from the ground, and we encourage the Council to develop the concept further.

The Council should continue to actively seek ways to improve its ability to prevent conflict and to solve long-term conflicts on its agenda. We encourage the Council to put special emphasis on prevention and to find new, innovative ways to tackle emerging conflicts at an early stage. We welcome the use of horizon-scanning and encourage the Council to further develop and regularize the practice.

Enhanced cooperation with other United Nations bodies and partner organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and regional and subregional organizations, is essential. For example, the Council should regularly seek the advice of the chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission configurations by inviting them to participate in relevant Council meetings, including in connection with mission mandate renewals. In addition, troop- and police-contributing countries should be more closely engaged at all stages of decision-making about peacekeeping operations.

The Council has made good progress in developing cross-cutting thematic issues, for example, women and peace and security. The Council should now go further and systematically link country-specific situations and horizontal themes. That is important both from an operational point of view and a normative one. The Nordic countries welcome the significant progress achieved in enhancing due process both for listing and delisting procedures of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities. We recommend that those fair and clear procedures be extended to other sanctions regimes also. While the mandate of the Ombudsperson has been strengthened, we suggest it be extended for an unlimited period.

Much has been done to improve the work and the working methods of the Council, but much remains to be done. We call on the Council to start implementing the two presidential notes, S/2006/507 and its update S/2010/507, and the innovations contained therein, in a more systematic manner. In that light, we strongly encourage the Council to continue holding annual open debates on its working methods.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Marn (Slovenia): I would like to thank the Indian presidency for convening today's open debate and also to thank the Indian and Portuguese delegations for the detailed concept note (S/2012/853, annex) for our discussion. It is timely that after one year we continue debate in an open format on this important issue.

If we want to improve the Council's efficiency, enhance its legitimacy and strengthen its role as a body entrusted by the Charter with the maintenance of international peace and security, we must consider improving its working methods and, most importantly, its transparency vis-à-vis the wider United Nations membership. In recent years we have seen some progress towards the realization of those goals. We welcome the initiatives by the group of five small nations in that respect. The Council should represent the interests and address the concerns of the entire United Nations membership.

All United Nations Members have been constantly confronted with an increasing number of Security

Council decisions with notable security, legal and financial implications for each Member State. For that reason also the Council must ensure better transparency and engagement with non-Council members in its decision-making processes on a more regular basis. The holding of open briefings and debates remains of particular importance. The wider membership should have an opportunity for its views to be heard and, to the extent possible, reflected in the outcomes of those debates. Consideration could be given to the order of speakers, while also allowing some time between the meeting and the adoption of a possible outcome document. That would demonstrate that the Council is willing to reflect on views presented by the wider membership before taking a final decision.

The distribution of concept papers that include guiding questions should be guaranteed well in advance, so that delegations can adequately prepare for their interventions. We should also not underestimate the role of regional and subregional organizations, which not only possess knowledge about specific threats affecting their regions but also are better suited to ensuring a more coordinated approach at the local, national and regional levels.

To enhance the Council's capacity for prevention we support regular open briefings by the Secretariat, the Special Representatives of and Special Advisers to the Secretary-General on the situations on the Council's agenda and those of emerging concern, including by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society play a crucial role in raising awareness. Regular thematic Arria Formula meetings could effectively complement the work of the Council on more specific issues, in order to make better use of information available from the NGO sector.

The Security Council should emphasize the importance of the rule of law in dealing with matters on its agenda. That includes references to upholding and promoting international law and ensuring that its own decisions are firmly rooted in that body of law, including the Charter, international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international criminal law. Special attention should be paid to the protection of civilians and those most vulnerable. We urge the permanent members to refrain from the use of the veto in the event of genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Slovenia remains convinced that Security Council reform needs to address both enlargement of its membership and improvement of its working methods. In that context, it is crucial to ensure that the Council continues to regularly assess how its practice matches the goals set out in the note by the President contained in document S/2006/507, with all updates, and that it continues to collect and build on valuable input from the whole membership on ways to further improve its working methods.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to start by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. I also thank you for your concept note (S/2012/853, annex), which gives us sensible guidance for the development of our debate.

As the note points out, the working methods of the Security Council concern all United Nations Member States. It is indeed in the interest of the whole membership that the Council becomes more efficient in order to meet satisfactorily the functions assigned to it by the Charter. The greater the possibilities for involvement of all Members in the work of the Council, the greater the authority and influence of this body, which is called upon in a very particular manner to confront the threats to international peace and security.

The road taken during the past few years has had positive developments in increasing transparency in the Security Council. I wish especially to acknowledge the role played by Portugal during the last two years at the head of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, building on the basis of the previous work of Belgium, Japan, Slovakia, Panama and Bosnia and Herzegovina, just to mention their predecessors in that endeavour.

The role being played by the group of five small nations, composed of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore, and Switzerland, also deserves to be highlighted. Their ongoing contributions are an impetus to the necessary collective discussion. I support and endorse the remarks made by the Ambassador of Costa Rica this afternoon and thank him for them.

The members of the Security Council are committed to implementing the measures contained in the note by the President contained in document S/2010/507. Some of the measures are being well implemented. That is the case, for example, of those concerning the Council's monthly programme of work, such as the tentative forecast, the briefings of the incoming presidency and the regular updates of the programme of work. Other measures could be put into practice in a more consistent way, such as the proposals contained in paragraph 28 on open debates, paragraph 44 on draft resolutions and draft presidential statements or press statements, paragraph 59 *in fine* on informal or interactive dialogues, and paragraph 65 on the Arria Formula.

We believe that we should continue to update and expand note 507 with additional measures. Some of these were set out in the 25 March 2011 letter by the group of five small States. I reiterate our support for the following three points in particular — first, the outgoing presidency's briefings on the implementation of the Council's programme of work; secondly, the establishment of a working group on lessons learned that would assess compliance with resolutions and propose mechanisms to improve it; and thirdly, the inclusion of a specific section on the implementation of working methods in the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly.

As an additional measure, we believe it would be advisable to update information on the composition of the different groups in charge of writing the first drafts of resolutions. We believe that such drafts should be circulated before they are discussed by all Council members in informal consultations.

It is a fact that there are no specific measures about the veto in note 507. Spain is in favour of including such measures in future updates of the note. We see no drawback to permanent members of the Security Council committing themselves to the implementation of such measures, especially when these are supported by the vast majority of Member States. Such measures would include explanations of the reasons for using the veto, which is equivalent to explanations of vote, or the waiver of the veto in cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We believe that the guidelines set forth in the concept note are very timely. We trust that they will be developed so that the ideas put forward in today's debate will be used as a basis for the development of proposals in the targeted areas in order to improve transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies. Those proposals, when duly worked out, could be incorporated into note 507, which I propose should be regularly updated — for example, every four years.

To conclude, we believe that it is the responsibility of all Member States to contribute to the objective of making the Security Council a more transparent and inclusive organ, as well as more efficient and effective. We are certain that today's meeting will bring new impetus and lay down valuable tracks leading to progress towards that goal.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal.

Mr. Diallo (Senegal): I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Group of African States. I congratulate India on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November, and I thank it for including this very important aspect of Security Council reform in the Council's programme of work.

We welcome the concept note (S/2012/853, annex) circulated in a letter by the Permanent Representatives of India and Portugal, and take note of the efforts made by the Council towards improving its working methods.

We welcome the improvement we have seen in the working methods of the Council, including the use of informal interactive dialogue to interact informally with individual Member States, the Peacebuilding Council and subregional and regional organizations, and to address such issues as penholders, chairs of subsidiary bodies, preparation of the annual report and monthly assessments, all of which are, in our view, modest but meaningful steps towards improving the work of the Council.

We urge the Council to continue building on the important advances made through further improvement of the working methods. However, we remain convinced that cosmetic changes to the working methods do not respond to the fundamental need for reform of the Security Council and an expansion of its membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Those values continue to be inconsistent with having a Security Council in which Africa remains unrepresented in the permanent category and underrepresented in the non-permanent category.

Our participation in today's debate is firmly rooted in our commitment to the African Common Position articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration on the reform of the United Nations. We remain convinced of the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system that takes into account the principles, objectives and ideals of the United Nations Charter for a fairer world based on universalism, equity and regional balance. We are convinced that the reform of the United Nations should be all-inclusive, encompassing all components of the United Nations system, including the General Assembly and the Security Council. In that regard, we continue to call for a comprehensive reform of the Council as called for in General Assembly decision 62/557, and in that regard we continue to stress the interconnectedness of the five clusters of Security Council reform.

On the question of the two clusters related to the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly and to the working methods, we have at all times maintained a principled position on those two issues, underscoring the need to uphold the primacy of and full respect for the provisions of the United Nations Charter appertaining to the powers and functions of the General Assembly. The two clusters are inextricably interrelated, and there has been some emerging convergence among general views as the key elements have not given rise to any controversy — except among the permanent five, which maintain that reforming the working methods of the Council is a responsibility of the Council itself. Notwithstanding that point, several concrete proposals on how to improve the transparency of and access to the Council, including adopting set rules of procedure, remain actively on the table.

Our proposal on those two clusters, transmitted in our letter dated 23 December 2009, is reflected in the compilation text. In that regard, we maintain that the two organs must work closely together within their respective spheres in seeking solutions to the plethora of challenges confronting the international community, with the Security Council focusing on issues mandated under the Charter in order to foster harmonious interaction, ensure a cooperative relationship between the Council and the General Assembly without encroaching on each other's mandates spelled out in the Charter, and find the correct constitutional balance between them.

The relationship between the Council and the General Assembly remains a matter of paramount importance on the reform agenda, in fulfilment of what was agreed in the World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), which called for the full and speedy implementation of measures adopted by the General Assembly with a view to strengthening its role and authority and the leadership role of the President of the General Assembly. It also called for strengthening the relationship between the General Assembly and the other principal organs to ensure better coordination on current issues requiring coordinated United Nations action pursuant to their respective mandates.

It is essential to maintain a balance among the principal organs of the United Nations, and particularly between the Security Council and the General Assembly, in order to enable the Organization to meet existing and emerging threats and challenges. The role of the Assembly, including on issues relating to international peace and security, as provided for in the relevant Articles of the Charter, must not only be enhanced but strengthened in order to enable it play its proper role as the most representative, democratic and deliberative policymaking body of the United Nations.

Regarding the Council's working methods, Africa favours a more accessible, democratic, representative, accountable, transparent and effective Security Council that is and must be able to respond in a timely manner.

We commend the improved cooperation between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council, which has resulted in more structured and effective annual consultations between them. We will continue to urge enhanced coordination between them, as well as more predictable and sustained sources of funding for African Union peacekeeping operations and to support post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa. Sustained cooperation between the Council and regional organizations will unquestionably be immensely helpful in addressing current and future challenges to international peace and security. Despite such positive developments, we remain concerned about inconsistency in the Council's decisions, as demonstrated by its growing selectivity in addressing issues of grave concern to regional organizations.

In conclusion, improving the working methods of the Security Council is an integral part of the reform process. The fact that the Council itself has been seized of the review of its working methods and that its rules of procedure have been provisional for the past 63 years or so is a clear indication of how imperative

it is to address this issue. We note that the main thrust of all the various groups' and stakeholders' positions is that we should ensure that the Security Council is transparent, inclusive, accountable and accessible in its working methods.

In that regard, the Council continues to fall short of the African Common Position on its working methods, and we stress that more is expected of those methods in terms of inclusivity, transparency and accountability if the Council's decisions are to be seen as legitimate and effective. We should therefore like to reiterate Africa's readiness to work with all interested groups and Member States to achieve decisive progress in this area, but in the context of a comprehensive package within the reform process, not in isolation from other clusters, since the issue of improving working methods is also very much tied to that of the expansion of the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay is especially grateful for the convening of this debate. Efforts to improve the working methods of any entity with a view to making it more efficient and transparent are always welcome and should be an ongoing objective, especially as we are talking about the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We have always maintained that improving the Security Council's working methods is a valid and necessary exercise. The Council needs improvements that will make it more transparent, inclusive, effective and accountable for its actions — improvements that cannot be postponed in the times we live in. This is both feasible and necessary, even in the short term, so long as the political will is there, as the progress made in previous years has shown, including in the recent work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions chaired by Portugal.

There is much room for improvement in the Council's working methods. The recommendations contained in draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 are a good example of what can and should be done. Most require no substantive modifications and yet would still have positive effects both on practical issues and on outside perceptions of the Council. Others, such as those relating to the use of the veto, will undoubtedly require a thorough debate, particularly among the permanent members, but we believe that debate is inevitable.

As a country that is deeply committed to the peacekeeping system of the United Nations, Uruguay attaches particular importance to all issues relating to the establishment and development of peacekeeping operation mandates, and especially to the interaction and transparency that should characterize relations between the Council and troop-contributing countries, which is not only an end in itself but also a way of enhancing the mandates' effectiveness. Uruguay acknowledges that we have seen significant improvements in this area in recent years, but we believe that they have not been consolidated and that their implementation has been uneven. Much remains to be done in this area.

It is important that we not lose momentum on this matter. We hope this debate will be a catalyst for the prevailing desire of the majority in the United Nations and the international community as a whole for this organ to be more effective, transparent, and capable of rising to today's complex challenges. Uruguay is ready to play a proactive and constructive role in those efforts for the benefit of all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on the important subject of the working methods of the Security Council. We also thank you for your helpful concept note (S/2012/853, annex).

Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the recent debate in the General Assembly on the annual report of the Security Council (A/67/2) and Security Council reform, an overwhelmingly large number of countries once again underscored the need for a more transparent, democratic and effective Council. Indeed, the Council is entrusted with the heavy responsibility of maintaining international peace and security — a responsibility that requires its constant, vigorous and even-handed oversight, as well as the full support and cooperation of all United Nations Member States. The Security Council has risen to the occasion during many challenges, and Indonesia commends its role, but there is no doubt that the Council would be able to discharge its responsibilities more effectively

through modified working methods that enhance its transparency, inclusiveness, accountability and efficiency.

Indonesia welcomes the Council's efforts to improve its working methods over the years, including by holding a significant number of open meetings with the countries concerned, troop and police contributors and other stakeholders. Those efforts need to be intensified. We hope that there will be comprehensive improvement in all aspects of the Council's workings. Allow me, in this regard, to put forward the following observations.

First, the Council should be more accessible, transparent and efficient, particularly for non-member States. Greater transparency in the Council's workings and more meaningful interaction with the non-permanent members and non-mmbers would enrich the Council's decision-making and strengthen support for its actions.

Secondly, there should be greater consultation, especially with members with a special interest in substantive matters under consideration by the Council.

Thirdly, Member States, in particularly those affected by sanctions, should, at their request, be given the right to participate and offer substantive inputs in the meetings of relevant sanctions committees.

Fourthly, draft resolutions, presidential statements and other draft documents tabled at informal consultations of the whole of the Council should, if so authorized by draft authors, be promptly made available to non-Council members.

Fifthly, the Council should hold regular, timely and meaningful consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries, host countries, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, financial contributors and other countries directly concerned by a peacekeeping operation throughout all its stages. Substantive interaction with all peacekeeping stakeholders is necessary to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping missions are effectively enabled to achieve their mandates.

Finally, States must explain their reasons for using the veto when they do so, and a copy of such explanations should be circulated to all Member States. The Council is entrusted on behalf of all United Nations Members, and its actions and reasoning must be fully clear to everyone.

Indonesia thanks you, Sir, for this opportunity to present its views. We will continue to support the Security Council in its efforts to tangibly improve its working methods.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

One of the principle problems and challenges facing the United Nations 67 years after its founding is that it has failed to profoundly reform the Security Council into a transparent, democratic and effective body. Cuba underscores once again that the Security Council requires comprehensive, urgent and far-reaching reform. There can be no true reform of the United Nations until the Security Council is reformed. Council reform must necessarily include the modification of its working methods. The changes introduced in recent years to the working methods of the Council have been modest and limited. They do not guarantee the genuine participation of the membership in the work or meetings of the Council. Most changes have been formal.

The most important decisions, especially regarding highly topical issues, remain the purview of the permanent members of the Council and, at times, not even all of them. Most members of the Security Council have little scope to influence important decisions. Those of us who are outside the Council have even less.

The open debates that ocassionally accompany the adoption of presidential statements or resolutions are mere formalities, and we have repeatedly seen the Council adopt decisions before all speakers inscribed on the list have been heard. The Council must act on behalf of all Members of the Organization, in conformity with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, which requires the guaranteed and genuine participation of the 193 present Members of the United Nations in its work and decisions. Cuba reiterates its view that the following urgent changes must be made to the working methods, as a minimum.

The number of public meetings must be increased and become the norm, in keeping with Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter. Closed meetings and consultations should be held only in very exceptional cases. States concerned should be allowed to participate in the deliberations of the Council on questions directly

affecting them, in keeping with Article 31 of the Charter. Resolutions and presidential statements should reflect the views expressed by Member States in public debates. Non-Council members should have guaranteed access to subsidiary bodies, including the right to participate in their discussions. The rules of the Council, which are still provisional after almost 70 years, should be formalized in order to improve transparency and accountability.

We are concerned by the growing trend on the part of the Security Council to consider topics and assume functions that are not within its mandate, thereby usurping the roles assigned in the Charter to other organs, in particular the General Assembly. Such violations of the mandate established by the Charter of the United Nations must end immediately. We again urge the members of the Council to review the agenda of this organ with a view to aligning it with the functions to be carried out by the Security Council under its mandate.

The Council must strictly abide by the provisions of the Charter and all resolutions of the General Assembly as the principal deliberative and most representative policymaking body of the United Nations. The Council must give adequate account before the General Assembly, presenting annual reports that are truly analytical, as well as special reports, as called for in Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. Unfortunately, such special reports have yet to be seen.

The question of the veto is intrinsically linked to that of the working methods of the Council, in particular its decision-making mechanisms. The veto is an anachronistic and anti-democratic privilege that should be eliminated as soon as possible. Until it is, it will be important as a first step to consider various options for limiting the use of the veto, such as restricting it to measures adopted by the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter; establishing the option for the veto to be overriden by the affirmative votes of a certain number of members of the Council, depending on the number of members of an expanded Council; or establishing the option for a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly to override the veto.

A more transparent Council would be a more legitimate Council. A more inclusive and accessible Council that truly takes the opinions of Member States into account would be a more effective Council. Let us dispense with the rhetoric and usual ritual in discussing this important item. We are not lacking ideas or proposals. What is needed is action.

Let us eliminate once and for all the secrecy and lack of transparency in the work of the Council and the exclusion of the vast majority of members of the United Nations from its work and its decisions. Let us discuss proposals on reforming the working methods, such as those reiterated today by my delegation, and those of the Non-Aligned Movement, which Cuba fully supports. Let us not delay that exercise any further.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.